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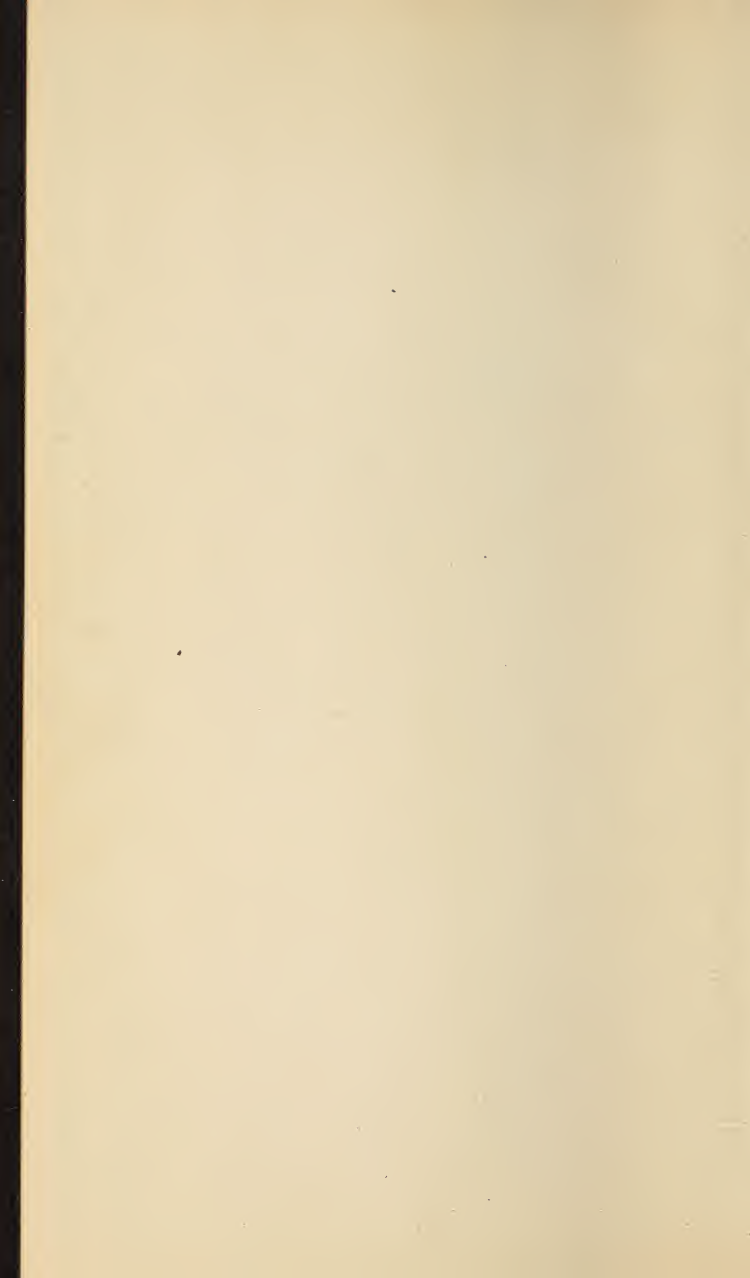
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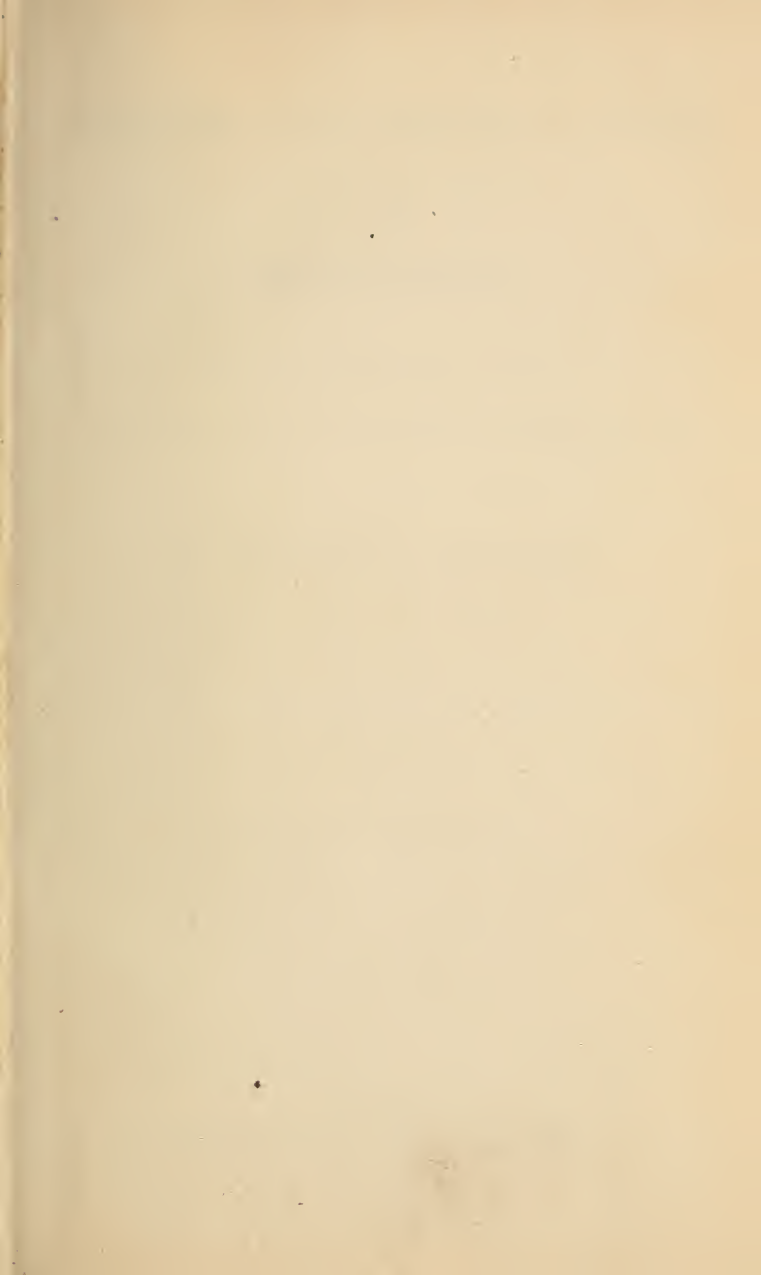
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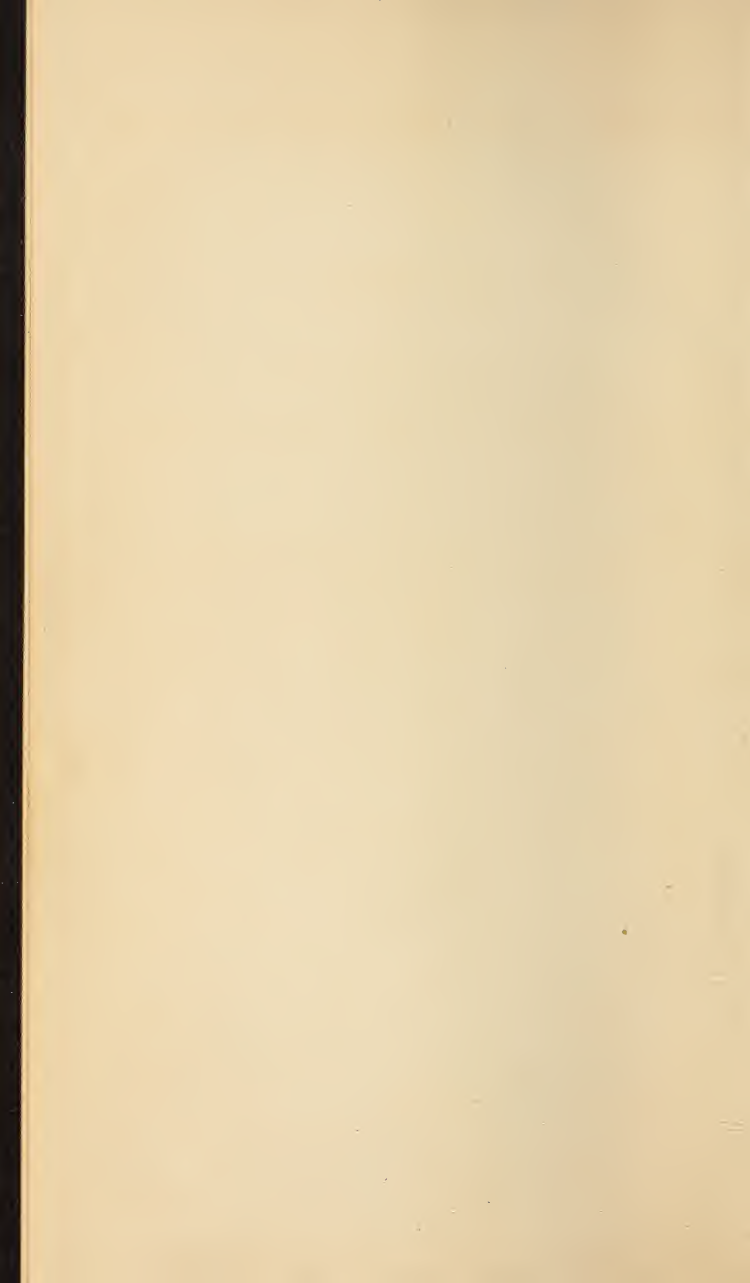
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# HOURS OF MEDITATION

AND

Devotional Reflection,

UPON VARIOUS SUBJECTS CONNECTED WITH THE

RELIGIOUS, MORAL, AND SOCIAL DUTIES OF LIFE.

BY HEINRICH ZSCHOKKE.



SECOND EDITION.

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## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

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THE elevated character and rare merits of the original work entitled, "*Die Stunden der Andacht*,"\* from which this Selection has been made, are abundantly proved in the almost unparalleled admiration it has continued to enjoy since its first appearance, now nearly half a century ago, throughout the whole of the Germanic Empire, in Switzerland, and, in fact, wherever the German language is read. The subject-matter of these Meditations is of a nature the importance of which the mind of the reader will quickly recognise: the principles advanced and defended are referred to his experience for corroboration; and the sentiments avowed appeal

\* In eight volumes, 8vo.

with irresistible force to the most cherished feelings of the heart.

The author of this work, a stranger to every sect or party, profoundly endowed with the knowledge of mankind and of nature, has, in these Meditations, developed with simplicity and grandeur the great truths of religion and morality; and, by the variety of his subjects, appropriate to the different sexes, ages, and conditions of life, has, in this work, made a forcible and extended application of these truths, and distinctly pointed out and defined the three-fold relation of man to God, the world, and himself.

The laws of Christianity, and those promulgated to us in all Revelation, are but the expression, by the infinitely wise Creator, of certain truths of human nature. The perception and observance of these truths constitute, in their degree, the wisdom of the individual. The noblest achievement of Philosophy—which, properly interpreted, means the love of *this* wisdom—is the demonstration, development, and application of these divinely-revealed truths or laws to the changeful phases of human life, in all its variety of private, social, and

public forms. That our truly philosophical author has actually effected this achievement is not to be affirmed; but that he has largely and successfully laboured to this end, the original eight volumes of these most interesting and instructive Meditations abundantly prove.

Until very recently the name of the author of this truly national production was unknown; but, at length, the venerated ZSCHOKKE, a man whose valuable works, in other fields of literature, have already conferred honour upon himself and country, has cast aside the veil of silence, and, to the gratification of thousands and tens of thousands of appreciating readers, proclaimed himself to be the writer. In conclusion, it may be added that, in gratitude for the immense benefits both Germany and Switzerland have derived from this noble work (which, having now reached its *twenty-third* edition, has circulated to an extent considerably beyond 200,000 copies), there is about to be founded, by subscription, in a spot to be selected in either of those countries, an institution which, in honour of the revered author, is to

be entitled, "ZSCHOKKE'S FOUNDATION," based upon the religious and moral results of his sublime work, "Die Stunden der Andacht," or, "HOURS OF MEDITATION."



## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

---

I HAVE visited the palaces of the rich and great, the cottages of the poor and humble, the workshop of the peaceful mechanic, and the barrack-room of the hardy soldier: I have everywhere met with minds disposed for religious exercises—I have everywhere found hearts anxious to be purified, and souls eager to be reconciled and united with God; and, finally, I have observed the instinct of immortality prevail, the sense of not belonging to this earth alone, and the expectation of living in a future that awaits us, after the grand change we must undergo in the hour of death.

But, alas! this desire and longing expressed by all these beings were only the desire and longing of the moment. The succeeding moment scattered all pious resolutions by the tumult and distraction

of business. Too often, men have appeared to me, not to bear within them the same heart when entering and kneeling at the altar of the temple of the Almighty, and when emerging from the sacred portals they have again returned into and mixed with the agitated sphere and scenes of ordinary life.

I have everywhere found *religion*, but very rarely a *heart constantly religious*; the *fear of God*, but rarely a *love of God*; *pious resolutions*, but rarely a *pious life*; and people who *publicly profess Christianity*, but rarely *disciples and followers of Christ*.

It is not without justice, that a thousand complaints are everywhere raised concerning the decline of the Christian religion; they are, indeed, but too well founded. On the one hand, I behold only levity, mockery, self-love, and efforts which are made to render powerless the warning voice of the internal monitor, by cunning evasions, or to lose the sense of it in the lap of pleasure and frivolity; and, on the other hand, I witness youths, men of mature age, and even men far advanced in years, tormented by cruel doubts

upon the subject of God and eternity, of the future fate of their soul, and of their destiny on this and the other side of the grave. Alas! a dreadful chain of public and private misery, a series of pains and calamities endured by numerous families, must inevitably result from a spirit thus deficient in religious character.

Doubtless, the wars in which we have been forced to participate, the numerous writings dictated by a superficial or vain knowledge, and read by minds not less superficial or vain, have contributed to the decay of a religious spirit, and the ruin of public morality. But many other sources of our errors lie concealed from observation. I will not, however, permit myself to make them known; I wish not to wound or mortify the feelings of any one. I have another object in view, and one more noble and elevated; and if I succeed in attaining it, even only partially, I shall one day close my eyes with delight and satisfaction, when summoned to quit this mortal life. The object I propose to myself, is—*to propagate true Christianity by reanimating the zeal for internal and domestic devotion.*

Nothing secures to the sentiments of piety a more lasting and durable sway; nothing more excites the heart to noble and Christian action; than converse with God in the hours of solitude, when the soul, disengaged from the cares and occupations of life, turns towards and approaches its celestial Father, in order to devote itself entirely to Him. Nothing can add so much to domestic happiness as these communings with God, in which a father and mother, in the bosom of their family, indulge, with those around them, in the contemplation of God and His works; and the sacred interests of their own souls; of the truths and benefits of the religion of Christ, the eternal future, and, finally, of the hopes belonging to a spirit created for immortal life. At the conclusion of these affecting exercises, the calmness and serenity of peace communicate themselves to all the members of the family; a tear of emotion seals the bond of their hearts, and confirms their resolution to live religiously on earth, so that they may hereafter dwell eternally with God.

Whoever has experienced such a state of comfort, will know and feel the truth of what I have

just described; and he who is ignorant of this happiness, and who seeks everywhere around the happiness after which he thirsts, ah! why does he not aspire to this only happiness, which nothing can take from him, and the price of which calamity itself can only enhance!

It is to promote and multiply these scenes of devotional meditation and domestic happiness, that these Discourses are written and published.

To you, young people of both sexes, who enter upon the world with a pleasure mixed with inquietude, and who have not hitherto proved, by culpable negligence, unfaithful to your better self, I dedicate these meditations. May they inspire you with a noble moderation in the moment of pleasure, and a religious courage and resignation in the hour of trial!

I dedicate them to you also, husbands and wives, who walk together the path of life, who offer up in common your souls to God, and who bring up your children in Christian simplicity, so that you may be enabled to return to your Author the fruits of the cherished gifts you owe to His paternal goodness.

And, finally, I dedicate them to you, men of venerable age, and in the evening of your terrestrial pilgrimage; whose looks, directed far beyond this world which perishes, are borne towards the Aurora of eternal life, in the celestial realms above.



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THE  
PROGRESS OF ENLIGHTENMENT.

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EPHESIANS v. 9. 17.

“For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.”——“Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.”

THERE are many evils, the origin of which we often seek in the mind, whereas it ought rather to be sought in the heart. In fact, the dispositions of the heart often depend less upon the clearness or confusion of our ideas, than is believed. In many instances, baseness of character is found united with an enlightened understanding; and distinguished talents may be accompanied by low, vicious inclinations. How many men appear to have acquired a superiority of views, intelligence, and ability, only to give a brilliancy to their vices, or at least to defend them in a more dazzling and deceptive manner. On the other hand, we often find the low-born and ignorant man

endued with true nobleness of heart, and combining a sincere and elevated piety with a very defective intellect.

But this truth, confirmed by experience, does not by any means authorise us to condemn all progress of enlightenment as the cause of the corruption of mankind. No: often those who have effected the largest acquisitions of knowledge have been most remarkable for the virtue of their lives; and we see every day in the ignorant and vulgar classes, vices of a base and revolting character. Hence it results that nobleness of character is not dependent on intellectual faculties and acquirements.

At the present day, it is the fashion among certain classes to denounce whatever is termed "march of intellect." In distinguished circles, in respectable and well-meant writings, and sometimes even in the pulpit itself, progress of intelligence is assailed as one of the principal vices of our day—the source of all the evils, public and private, under which society at present groans. They cite unceasingly the horrors with which ambition, cupidity, perversity, and spirit of riot overwhelmed an extensive kingdom for several years; and they exclaim, "Behold the results of the vaunted progress of intelligence!" They point also at the fall of empires once flourishing,

but subsequently destroyed by foreign enemies; and they exclaim, "Behold the work of this boasted enlightenment!" They refer to the plains devastated by war, to the towns and villages reduced to ashes; and they repeat, "All these evils are the dreadful effects of that enlightenment so much lauded!"

These bitter and exaggerated complaints more especially proceed from men whose advanced age permits them no longer to follow the march of the human mind: age and inactivity have rendered them incapable of making further progress themselves, or of extending their acquirements in knowledge. They fancy the world approaching to ruin, because it is no longer as they beheld it in their youth. If they possessed the power, they would re-establish all that the irresistible movement of time has swept away; the narrow ideas that have now become enlarged, and the feeble arts that are now increased in power, and daily making fresh triumphs.

But alas! how blind are these self-opinionated men, who fancy themselves more capable of governing the world than the almighty and allwise God, the author of the very movement which they have the boldness to censure and condemn! They would fain check in their course, and condemn to immobility, the rapid wheels which bear

our destinies along. They forget, however, that wars and revolutions have always existed, and that they are more frequent amongst ignorant and barbarous nations than amongst civilised and enlightened people. They appear to forget that, in their youth, they themselves were unwilling to remain stationary, or to be satisfied with the knowledge, possessions, and condition of their ancestors.

Nevertheless, it is true that they have often reason to condemn the progress of that sort of enlightenment which is not *the true enlightenment*. They are right in reference to that corruption which, under the deceptive name of "the march of intellect," removes all restraint from the passions of the multitude, and holds out impunity to injustice and debauchery. Their indignation was doubtless just and lawful, when daring boldness and arrogance overthrew temples, profaned altars, and refused to the throne its firmest support—the respect and love of the people. But what was the origin of these crimes? Of what number and quality were those guilty of them? Can we, in these excesses, recognise enlightenment? What countless atrocities have been committed in the name of religion, both by individuals and by nations! But who, for this reason, would venture or desire to declare himself an enemy to religion?

We are led by these reflections to an important subject of inquiry—namely, what kind and degree of influence enlightenment exerts upon the weal of men. But what are we to properly understand by the progress of enlightenment?—We reply, that it consists in the *advancement of reason, illumined by the torch of truth.*

How? Should I wish to condemn the light and truth which dissipates the darkness of the human mind? Has the wise Creator gifted me with reason only to leave it to slumber in the night of ignorance? Ought I not to make the most of the talent He has confided to me? Is not to follow and encourage the progress of intellect one of my most noble duties?

O ye, who have acquired, on a variety of subjects, more just and more enlightened ideas than many other men, which among you would consent to return to his former errors, to resume his early ignorance, and to yield afresh to the yoke of his former superstition?—Scarcely one of the millions of your number would consent! And if you find it beneficial and useful for yourselves to have cultivated your reason, increased your knowledge, and abjured ridiculous prejudices, why should you refuse to others the right of enlightening their mind by the light of truth? Why should you raise your voice against the



glorious triumphs that have so powerfully contributed to your happiness? By what right do you pretend that other classes of society should possess only a limited and fixed portion of intelligence, whilst you claim peculiar privileges for your own favoured class? O ye senseless reformers of the plans of Providence, know that God governs the world without regard to the hypocritical murmurs of your selfishness, or to the wishes of your blind pride. Like the sun, which never ceases to dispense over every one its genial rays, so also truth is and will eternally be a good, accessible and common to all minds. You may take life away from the body, but you cannot kill the soul.

“Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.” The will of God is the happiness of all the spirits he has created; but this happiness increases in proportion to the knowledge of truth.

What was done by Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race? He found the world full of darkness: mankind being also in the shadow of death. He appeared like the sun of souls, and illumined mankind with his rays. He revealed to mortals truths which, until then, had not been announced to any one; his doctrine was addressed to the understanding of the meanest classes of

society—classes which, before he appeared, had been neglected by all philosophers and learned men, because it was deemed useless to instruct in the most elevated truths men destined to subjection and slavery.

The doctrine and enlightenment which Jesus diffused, with, indeed, a more than human boldness and power, were also the occasion or pretext of violence, of insurrections, wars, and effusion of blood: individuals perished, vast empires disappeared; but the power of truth prevailed and triumphed. Thousands of families may descend into the tomb, and the thrones of the most powerful kingdoms may be destroyed; but truth, spread through the empire of the mind, remains for ever imperishable.

This single fact suffices to show that, even upon this earth, the mind is the essential part of life, and that all terrestrial things are only the perishable clothing thereof. He who bequeaths to the world a new truth, exerts upon the generations to come a nobler influence than the conqueror of extensive dominions. Every error, however, is transient; and, sooner or later, it dies away, because God has only created the world for a perfection towards which man must gradually advance. All imperfection bears within it the principle of death; all that is true, good, and

perfect, contains the germ of an eternal existence.

What benefit was there not produced by the labours of the disciples of Christ! They spread themselves in all parts of the known world; they instructed the people by their discourses, and propagated, even amongst the most despised classes, the heavenly light of the truths they had received from their divine Master, Jesus.

Far, therefore, from seeking to preserve amongst mankind the ignorance, prejudices, superstition, and false ideas that may prevail, I will, in the name of knowledge, and in the name of the Saviour whose disciple I am, raise my spirit to harmony with the progress and order of the whole creation, as established by God. I will make use of my faculties, and profit by my position, in order to enlighten the mind of man, and ennoble his soul. But an undertaking so important requires that circumspection which ought to guide the Christian in all his operations; it demands great prudence, and a strict attention in the choice of the means: without such precautions, the remedies themselves may be changed into poison, and benefits be converted into instruments of abomination.

We cannot therefore acknowledge as propagators of enlightenment, men who are so imprudent as to *communicate to those whose reason is not suitably*



*prepared, truths which they themselves do not perfectly comprehend, and which truths, consequently, they interpret falsely, and must apply in a wrong and dangerous manner.* To enlighten man, is to excite him to reflection, and to render his mind sufficiently strong and independent to enable him, under favourable circumstances, ultimately to attain of himself the truth to which we undertake to guide him. It would be madness for a father and a mother to desire to inculcate into their children, whose reason is as yet but budding forth, all the truths known to themselves; and it would be not less so, to wish to impart to adults, whose minds are not sufficiently formed, truths and principles above their understanding. Everything has its season and measure: men whose minds are not at all cultivated, are in many respects still children; and their education demands caution.

Whence it is, that *to oppose with violence prejudices and customs which, with certain men, usefully serve as usual substitutes for truth*, is to give a proof, not of a noble love for enlightenment, but of an inhuman levity and inexcusable cruelty. We can only emerge from the darkness of night through the intermediate dawn into the light of day; and equally so, it is through errors and illusions that we attain insensibly to the knowledge of truth. When we give instruction to a child, we do not

commence with those truths which are the most elevated and the most pure in each kind, to which we wish to conduct it, and which are to form the conclusion of our instruction ; but we present the simplest ideas to the childish and feeble understanding of the young pupil ; and it is by this path that he will arrive, by little and little, at the knowledge of truth.

We must respect, therefore, the ancient customs and usages of every nation, if, wanting more pure enlightenment, these hereditary customs do but lead them to practical virtue. Respect also those useful prejudices which deter the uncultivated man from evil, especially if they awaken in his soul a sense and love of the good and noble. Your own mind being more enlightened, may refuse to recognise them as truths ; but your heart will render homage to their beneficial influence.

Our Divine Teacher, Jesus Christ himself, attacked not the numberless prejudices and errors of the Jewish people, among whom he dwelt. He spared them wherever he believed them to be harmless ; he respected them wherever he recognised their utility ; and sometimes his lessons are even based upon them. He excused the innocent prejudices of his first disciples, and treated them as a wise father treats his children whose understandings have not yet become developed : “I

have," says the Saviour, "yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John xvi. 12).

God has planted in our soul the love of truth, and the desire to increase our knowledge. The child which can scarcely understand our words, manifests already the wish to free itself from the bonds of ignorance. Every day it adds to its stock of knowledge; and in proportion as it learns to observe, its noble curiosity is augmented. It wishes to know all, and the reason of everything. This tendency to reflect and compare never ceases: even in the decline of life, we find an enjoyment in the thought that we are not inferior to other men in knowledge, in cultivation of mind, and intellectual power.

As, therefore, the Creator himself has implanted in our souls this desire of light and truth, how dare we to ask, with unreasonable doubt, if the development of mind is salutary to individuals or nations: if it be not desirable for governments to fix the limits where its progress should be checked; and if it be not dangerous to devote as much care to the instruction of the poorer classes, condemned to obscurity, as to that of persons distinguished by the prerogatives of birth, rank, and fortune? Who would venture to arrogate to himself exclusively the rights which the human soul derives from the

Deity? Does difference of rank and station in society procure different degrees of favour in the eyes of God? Before the tribunal of the Supreme Judge, is the king still privileged by the splendour of his throne, and the poor man treated as an object of contempt? No; in the eyes of God we are all equal: in the empire of souls, God is the Father of all men, and Jesus is the brother of all.

The development, therefore, of the mind, and the progress of knowledge, ought to have no other limits than have been prescribed by divine wisdom. The world of mind knows no other prerogatives of enlightenment than those established by the Creator, and which result from the varied nature of mind itself. Mortal man shares not with God the sceptre of the world; man, therefore, has no power or right to set a limit to what is denominated popular education, to assign to his fellow-man the portion of truth beyond which his desire shall not stretch. The attempt would only betray at once the impotence and blind bigotry of him who should set up his own puny will against the eternal laws of his Almighty Creator.

When the Messiah undertook to enlighten the world, he did not convert the gift of divine wisdom into an exclusive privilege for a few favoured classes. He was never seen to pass by in silence

the hut of the poor labourer, or that of the man whose lot was to serve others; he was never known to direct his steps exclusively towards the palaces of the great, the courts of monarchs, and the schools of the learned: but, on the contrary, our Divine Master sought in the poorest and most despised classes his first disciples, those who were chosen to propagate the doctrine of salvation. After His example, the apostles also preached truth equally unto the princes upon thrones, and to the indigent in their obscurity. Yes, the eternal Son, sent into the world by the Father of mankind, proved that which before was not felt or not recognised, namely, that the most obscure and the most distinguished have equal right to the most exalted truths, and to the widest development of mind.

How can we for a moment call in question the beneficial influence of enlightenment upon the happiness of mankind? Do not the examples and facts of history appeal with sufficient force to our hearts? Ignorant nations have ever been the most miserable; nor do they emerge from their barbarism, or abjure their brutal customs and manners, until the heart-softening light of science has dispelled the darkness of their minds.

The more our mind is enlightened, the more capable it is to comprehend the works of creation,



and to love the Creator. The more the light is spread around, and the more the understanding becomes open to ideas of wisdom and order, the nearer also does truth lift us to the Divine Intelligence.

The ignorant heathen bends his knee before the image of wood or stone, and figures without life, which he calls his gods. The more enlightened heathen ceases to worship the wood or stone; he raises his eyes towards the sun which animates the world, and in that adores the soul of nature. One step further, and he only sees in that planet an object created whose course is subject to determined laws, and he addresses his prayer to invisible gods. Yet another advance in the realm of thought, and he beholds united in one hand the reins of the empire of the world; and he no longer divides the government of the earth amongst various rival divinities, but falls prostrate with reverence before the greatest of all Beings, the Creator of the universe, and the only eternal God.

The ignorant, doubtless, may possess religion and virtue; but in proportion as human reason is developed, religious worship becomes more elevated, and virtue more pure. The child whose intelligence is still very limited, behaves well from obedience; it observes the will of God in submit-

ting to its earthly parents, and it avoids evil from the fear of punishment. But soon its reason has made progress ; what formerly it dreaded through punishment, it now fears through shame ; and it begins to act well through a feeling of honour. This principle leads the child to perform every good and generous action. But the philosopher needs not honour or shame to elevate him to the divine sublimity of virtue. He knows the weakness of human understanding ; he knows that at times mortals admire brilliant vice, and despise indigent and modest wisdom. He honours virtue, because it constitutes the dignity of his immortal soul ; he hates vice, because vice is evil, and evil raises a wall of separation between man and the Deity.

The stupid and vulgar are not, doubtless, deprived of every sort of enjoyment ; but their happiness is circumscribed as their ideas. The only pleasures they know are those of the senses : they esteem them more than the enjoyments of mind, which their soul is incapable of obtaining. The charms which are procured by earthly possessions, splendour of dress, and marks of external consideration, captivate them. But the more enlightened, on the contrary, even when they do not despise the purely sensual pleasures, seek, above all, their happiness in the occupations of the mind.

Thus, the salutary influence of enlightenment upon individual and social happiness, is evident. Nor can it be otherwise: our intellectual progress enters into the plan of our existence; for it performs part of the perfection to which immortal beings, created after the image of God, ought to aspire. We cannot ennoble the matter of our body; that is only perishable dust,—a transient covering, which we all alike put off; but what we can, and what we ought to ennoble in ourselves, is our mind, alone perfectible, and which alone belongs to eternity.

True intellectual progress consists less in the things that are attended to, than in the manner in which they are studied. The reflective faculties receive development from every mental acquisition; and positive knowledge becomes at once the subject of meditation and the instrument of moral perfection. It is, therefore, our bounden duty to all men, even the poorest and most unfortunate, to facilitate the cultivation of their minds, and the acquisition of knowledge; to struggle against everything that may give to children or to adults false and dangerous ideas of men, of the world, and of their own wants.

It is often difficult, sometimes impossible, to eradicate old standing prejudices; nor can we expect persons, no longer young, suddenly to



change their modes of thinking, and renounce errors which custom has endeared. What is prescribed by Christianity is tolerance and indulgence, especially when the errors or differences of opinion are not manifestly contrary to general happiness.

But all knowledge, and all enlightenment, are useless, unless they become the principle of elevated sentiments and virtuous actions.

What purpose would the highest wisdom serve, if it did not raise us above circumstances, and impart a durable happiness? What end would enlightenment serve, if not to guide us through the darkness of life, towards the heavenly abode of eternity? "For ye were sometimes darkness," says St. Paul, "but now are ye light in the Lord : walk as children of the light. For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth" (Ephes. v. 8, 9).

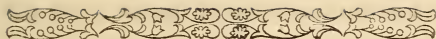
Purity of manners, activity of virtue, and christian charity, are the signs by which is manifested the progress of the only enlightenment which ennobles the soul. Let no person boast the progress of his mind, if he bears not within him these honourable marks of moral advancement.

The inheritors of the heavenly possessions are not those who proclaim the wisdom of Thy works, and who know Thy ordinances, O Almighty Father, but those who do Thy will. It is by their fruits—

it is by their works that you shall know them—saith our Saviour.

I will aim then, without ceasing, at the possession of light and truth ; but the final object of all my efforts shall be the sanctification of my feelings and conduct.—AMEN.





## RECONCILIATION.

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MATTHEW v. 23, 24.

“ Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee ; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way ; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.”

NOTHING is more onerous or difficult to mankind generally, than to sincerely reconcile themselves with those by whom they have been injured or offended. The animal nature revolts at a thought so generous, and the instinct of revenge bursts forth in the heart with all its obstinate and brutal violence ; a selfish and arbitrary pride, under the name of a noble dignity of heart, becomes clamorous, and, refusing to yield the least portion of its right, says “ Cannot others make the first advance, as well as myself ? It is not I that have been the originator, the exciting cause of the quarrel ; why, therefore, should I now beg and seek for peace and friendship, as if I alone were the party to be blamed ? ” Thus the repugnant

heart, if it be not sufficiently degraded to repudiate or reject the duty of reconciliation, strives at least to palliate the refusal to be the first to come forward, and endeavours to justify it by a thousand subterfuges before the tribunal of public opinion and private conscience.

“ Jesus has not,” say they, “ meant or interpreted this duty so literally, that whilst under the recollection of an old offence, or it may be of a more recent injury, the aggrieved should give way, and be the first to proffer a reconciliation.” But we shall find that what Jesus has literally meant is, that you should straightway make him who has offended you the especial object of your benevolence, and that you abjure all hatred towards your enemy. For thus does Jesus himself conclude his exhortation, “ Bless them that curse you ; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you ; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head ; ” which means thus : Show them, in word and deed, that you are more noble and generous than they are, because you recompense the injuries that you did not merit, with goodness that they do not deserve on their part ; and in such wise you make them feel and bring them to a knowledge of their baseness, that they cannot look at you without the burning blush of shame upon their cheek.

“ I will pardon,” you say, “ my enemy at heart, but more cannot be required of me ! ” Is not this one of the everyday gross self-delusions of ordinary and vulgar minds ? You will pardon in your heart ; God will know it : but why should your adversary know nothing of it ? Is this sincere forgiveness, when he who receives it is to remain in ignorance of it ? You pardon in secret, but your silence perpetuates resentment and its bitter fruits. What is required of you is not to go in person to your enemy and say, “ I forgive you, and desire a reconciliation with you,” but to prove to him, by your conduct, that you sincerely pardon him, and that you feel no rancour towards him.

“ I will forgive,” it is said, “ but I cannot possibly forget ! ” which generally signifies, I will not revenge myself, but I shall be on my guard against offering any friendly services and favours again. Is not that, however, revenge under another guise, when you refuse to do a kindness or service for him from whom you may have received some offence ? Jesus invites and requires of us to show ourselves even the friends of our enemies ; but does friendship consist in being only content not ourselves to injure, but to remain passive spectators of the evil committed by others upon each other ?

“ Some opportunity, no doubt,” say some, “ will

present itself to terminate the quarrel which divides us." Whence do you know that it will arrive? You only, in fact, defer the reconciliation, because you do not feel sincerely upon the subject. If you were animated by really noble sentiments, you would seek with impatient pleasure for the opportunity of showing to your adversary that the sting of the offence is removed from your heart. Nay, if your conscience reproaches you with having perhaps gone too far in the first ebullition, what else is it but a miserable false shame, which prevents you from yielding and begging pardon? To revenge one's self, or to punish others, is a brutal pleasure; but to possess a soul sufficiently grand and exalted to punish one's self, is a heavenly enjoyment. Wherefore should you take more glory in resembling the animal rather than the angel? Because, instead of being an imitator of Jesus, you are the slave of your own degrading and base feelings.

"I have nothing to reproach myself with," you again say, "in my own conduct, for I am the injured party. To require formally a reconciliation, or to oblige me to make advances to obtain it, would be making me appear as acknowledging a wrong I never committed. I am ready to forget my resentment; but will not renounce my right to protect and defend, which is one of my first duties." This is the language of a man anxious



to justify his aversion by logical motives, without reflecting that what is bad and censurable in itself is never justifiable ; everything that springs from a passionate sensibility is bad and censurable. Defend your right,—this is your duty ; but respect the right of your adversary, which is not less your duty. His conduct has inspired you with contempt, you will say ; but no matter. Your right consists in protecting your honour and social position ; but nothing can authorise you to cause your enemy to lose in any way the reputation he enjoyed and the rank he held in society. What was injustice on his part, can never become justice on your side. You merit contempt, if, by the elevation of your character, you do not force even your adversaries to esteem you. Prove, on the one hand, the validity of your invaded right ; but on the other, show that your soul is elevated above ignoble disgusts, and that, if even your right appeared revoked, in doubt eventually, still the nobility of your sentiments never would be so.

Peace cannot, it is true, ally itself with wickedness ; but still it is possible to effect peace with wicked individuals. Hate the sin, but not the sinner. You rebuke the errors of your friends, but you do not on that account discard those friends themselves. The mother chastises her child, but does not love it the less for that. The crime



which is punished by society with death, fills you with horror ; but your heart lends its pity to the malefactor, when led to the place of execution. You, in this case, recognise the possibility to distinguish between the fault and the individual : whence arises it that you cease to acknowledge it when the fault committed wounds you personally ? Fortify yourself against the malevolence of your adversary, but do not become malicious yourself in turn, for you only exasperate his irritation against you. The legitimate defence of your right is as distant from the thirst of vengeance as the heaven is removed from the earth.

Nations assert against nations their rights with the edge of the sword, because they have over them no earthly judge to decide upon their quarrel. The law and authorities of the state adjudicate and punish a fault, when the rights and privileges of a citizen have been violated ; but they leave over to the judgment and conscience of every individual the smaller grievances that may concern him. But even war, sanguinary war itself, has only for its object the right of one people, but not the destruction of the other ; and, in the state, the law and authorities adjudge only against the crime, and not against the person of the criminal. Do you wish to resemble barbarous nations and unrighteous judges, and hate the person, instead of con-

demning and repressing crime ? Nothing can more surely conciliate for you the esteem and respect of those who wish you ill, than this incorruptible justice ; which, whilst you blame them for their faults, prompts you to acknowledge their good qualities, and to serve and benefit them where you can, without, however, giving the name of virtues to their failings.

When we have been treated ill or unkindly by any one, our resentment usually presents him to our imagination in colours far more black and irreconcilable than he really is. All his good qualities become diminished in our eyes ; his imperfections appear magnified ; his words and actions, however trivial their import, are interpreted as so many indications of a bad character ; and even his acts of virtue are considered with distrust and suspicion. This disposition, which excludes all equanimity of the soul, only associates itself with hatred, malice, and the blindness of selfish passion. It banishes from our heart every generous sentiment ; the spirit of Jesus is no longer in us.

We are more often as unjust in our friendship as in our aversion. Whether we live at variance with the one individual, or on good terms with the other, we fancy the former worse, or the latter better, than he really is ; and we exaggerate the faults of the one, and diminish those of the other.

If such delusions of mankind were of less frequent occurrence, there would neither be such numerous instances of men abandoning themselves to dire animosity, nor of giving themselves up to precipitate affection; they would hate with less bitterness, and love with less intensity. If, therefore, you wish to be wise, study the failings of your friends and the favourable features in the character of your adversaries: you will then not be deceived in friendship, and you will be more moderate in your aversion. There is not one upon earth so exemplary as to merit from us an affection equal to our most sacred duties; but neither is there any one so degraded as not to possess some quality wherewith to challenge real estimation.

The first germs of the majority of the disunions of mankind are generally sown by misconception, wrong interpretations of conduct,—hazarded, very possibly, at moments of ill humour,—and the whisperings and suggestions of suspicion, aroused, perhaps, without any cause. The mutual coldness often turns, at first, upon paltry trifles; this feeling is then strengthened by absurd reports, and statements, the effect of accident, augment the evil. At last, the false pride of neither party will give way; each must first see the other humbled; and thus, those perhaps who were completely adapted to mutually esteem and treasure each

other, and possessed the means of rendering to one another essential services, part from each other's company in aversion.

And does a mere trifle—for everything temporal and earthly is such—merit being the cause for rendering mutually our lives so bitter in every way? What can I gain by my hatred and rancour, if thereby I must be deprived of one single hour of peace and happiness? Is not he a fool indeed, who, with resentment and malice, infuses poison into the goblet of joy? If he that has offended us is morally less worthy than ourselves, what harm can his injury to us produce? Why do we not rather submit to his foibles; or, if higher duties forbid it, why do we not treat him in all other respects with generosity and forbearance, choosing rather the more noble and directly contrary way of action to that he has selected? Or if, despite his failings, he is recommended by praiseworthy qualities, why do we withhold from him the esteem they justify, and attach such exclusive and excessive importance to the former? Do we not thereby turn the arms against ourselves, and impair and deteriorate our own worth?

However grave an injury may be that we have received, it never can give us a right to hate the offender *personally*. His conduct merely warns us not to enter again into such relationship with him,

as to give him occasion to offend us a second time. The injury we have received should command us to be circumspect, but not to revenge ourselves. Vengeance only provokes vengeance ; but when, by a generous conduct, we constrain the offender to acknowledge his injustice, and to repent his precipitation, that is the triumph of the Christian and the sage : that is the exalted victory of virtue.

Obtain, therefore, this glorious triumph, if you have not enjoyed it already,—if you have never yet seen the tears of emotion in the eyes of a human being, whom, instead of hating, you compel to respect and honour you. Obtain this triumph, and you will never desire again the victory of revenge and malice. By this triumph is verified the words, “ Bless them that curse us, to do good to them that despitefully use us ! ” That which Jesus, your Divine Master, required, is your own triumph. Can you still consider his commandment too severe or difficult ?

The days of our communion together upon earth are so short, alas ! why should we poison them with anger and animosity ? There are still persons, perhaps, who mistake your character, and whom hitherto you could only endure with difficulty ; obtain over yourself a holy triumph towards a reconciliation. Who knows if the individual with whom you are at variance, and whom perhaps you



have also mortified, may not soon, nay even in a few days or hours, descend into the tomb? Would you wish to make his last moments heavy and miserable? Would you desire to prevent him from sleeping in peace? Ought he to leave this world with groans of regret, and to enter the presence of God with the sigh of accusation against you?

And you yourself, can you calculate the period you may still continue among us here below? Could you die tranquilly if you died unreconciled? And if even, when on the bed of death, the smile of pardon should play upon your dying lips, will your adversary be present to receive it? The most precious inheritance you can leave to your kindred, is the high estimation and friendship that you have enjoyed. Whosoever sinks into the tomb without being reconciled, leaves a malediction for a legacy.

What a sublime sensation must accompany the power of saying, "I know no one on earth whose enemy I am!" There is no disgrace in beholding one's self the object of hostile attack; but it is always discreditable and reprehensible to attack and wound others.

Dare I proclaim with joyous spirit, *I know no one on earth whose enemy I am, or towards whom I nourish resentment?* O Thou, who searchest the

heart, my soul is open to Thine eye: judge Thou, O God of charity and love! Do I wish to doom to hatred those that are my brothers by birth and in redemption,—Thy children, O Eternal and Divine Goodness? Would I wish to hate, for the sake of some wretched trifle, those Thou lovest? Would I desire to hate irreconcilably, and never to forgive,—I, who attend Thy temples of worship, who go to Thy altars,—who participate in the atonement-supper of Jesus Christ, the merciful Mediator of the world?

No, no; I will love those that hate me, bless those that curse me, and do good to them who injure me. I will protect the reputation of those that calumniate me, do service to those who refuse me their good offices, and succour those who have abandoned me in my necessity. We are all sinners, full of defects; and I will therefore be compassionate and indulgent. I will feel a friendship towards the individual, although I may blame and condemn the vice itself. Pardon me, O Lord, my offences, as I will pardon those who have offended me. Be Thou merciful, O Heavenly Judge, who art seated above the stars and the worlds, which bow before thee.—AMEN.





## THE OPINION AND JUDGMENT OF THE WORLD.

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EPHESIANS IV. 22—32.

“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore: putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole, steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

MANY persons, who have learnt in the school of experience how fickle and uncertain are the opinions and judgment of the multitude, feel no hesitation in treating them with proud disdain and contempt; and whether it be in forming

resolutions or in executing their design, they evince equal indifference in respect to what the world may think or say upon the subject. A still greater number, however,—or rather, the majority of mankind,—attach too great a value to public opinion; and, too easily biassed by, and too sensible to its favour or disfavour, they study more to please others than to act for the interest of their own welfare and salvation.

This infirmity is a source of much and varied discontent to numerous individuals. How many does it deprive of tranquillity of mind; and how many whole families are thus rendered unhappy! Every day it produces some coolness amongst even the most intimate friends; it poisons the relations of social life, and calls forth the most painful and afflicting results. And yet, a more proper and justly-formed idea and appreciation of the world's opinion would have spared us many anxious and sorrowful hours, and have ensured to our heart the calmness and repose it can now no longer enjoy.

But, alas! the fruits of experience are lost for us. In spite of the unhappy days our susceptibility for the opinion of the world has caused us to endure, we, nevertheless, do not abstain from the early inculcation into the minds of youth of a too deep respect for the

opinions of others. And what do we effect by this?—We imprudently prepare for them a melancholy prospect, and mislead and entangle them in false notions. We daily hear parents ask their children, in a tone of caution and warning, “What will the world say?” But very rarely do they show themselves sufficiently wise to ask, “What will our all-knowing God think?”

This phrase, “What will the world say?” exercises over us, from earliest infancy, great influence and power. Accustomed to hear and repeat it, we are more anxious to *appear* virtuous than to endeavour really to be so; and we lend a more willing and ready ear to the expression of public opinion than to the voice of our own conscience. Satisfied, and perfectly at ease when men pronounce a favourable judgment of our acts, we lose sight of the tribunal of our Supreme Judge.

Melancholy and wretched resource of infirm souls! We forget, that when once we are stretched in our coffin, we shall no longer be enabled to hear the opinion of mortals, whilst the sentence of the Sovereign Judge of the world will resound unto eternity! The good and favourable testimony of men, easy of deception, will be of no avail to us before Him who reads and penetrates all hearts, and whose almighty powers of knowledge cannot

be deceived or overcome by illusion. The opinion of the world is only based on external signs ; its view cannot dive into the mysteries of the heart, nor discover its most hidden secrets. It only judges the outside of man, which forms the foundation of its opinion. How often may it not be deceived ! Each of us only forms his estimate of the actions of others in proportion to our peculiar inclinations, and the motives by which they are influenced. How erroneous and uncertain must be this rule for our judgment !

When we thus know the impure sources of the world's opinion, can and ought we to attach to it so much importance ? How often have the most virtuous men been painfully mistaken by their contemporaries, and their hard-earned reputation calumniated whilst living, but to the glory of which, when dead, posterity has gratefully raised the most precious and lasting monuments ! And again, how many have been lauded and exalted to the skies as models of virtue, who, after death, have been proved to be, whilst living, the authors of crime and evil ! The same people that strewed with palm-trees the path before the Saviour, and saluted him with hosannas when he entered Jerusalem, shortly afterwards made the air resound with their cruel cries of "Crucify him ! crucify him !" How often have not the prejudice and

biassed feelings of the judge condemned the innocent to suffer in chains for the guilty, and made virtue instead of crime perish on the scaffold.

But, on the other hand, it would be equally dangerous, in all cases, to treat with proud disdain the opinion held of us by others. It should never be considered a matter of indifference, whether we enjoy, amidst our contemporaries, a good or bad reputation; for, in many situations of life, we cannot do good but with the support derived from public confidence. The Christian is naturally led to ask himself this important question, “*How am I to act in respect to the opinion of my fellow-creatures, whether it regards myself or concerns others?*”

First, I will consider *my duty as a witness of the judgment formed of my relations, friends, and acquaintances*. For I cannot be indifferent to the good or to the evil that may happen to them; living with and amongst them, I ought, and am bound to suffer with them when they suffer.

When you perceive an opinion formed and becoming more firmly established, which threatens the good reputation of your friend, endeavour to ascertain the source of the reports circulated. This source once traced, it will be easy for you to form a judgment whether it is pure or not. But it is rare to discover the original author of a public rumour,



which often consists of hearsays, repeated by idle and stupid mischief-makers. Tired with their nullity, many persons, in order to give themselves importance, often hasten to circulate certain scraps of conversation, scarcely heard perhaps, and often misunderstood. Hatred also, private jealousy, the mania for derision and banter, the promptitude to suspect evil, and a vulgar and blind credulity—all these vices, which appear only the consequences of a bad education, are the source of many unfavourable and erroneous reports.

*Be cautious not to repeat blindly the opinion of the world*, so that you may avoid becoming a participator in the wrong it inflicts. “Judge not, that ye be not judged; and with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again” (Matt. vii. 1, 2).

Listen to the opinions expressed by short-sighted men, but do not lightly yield much faith to them; above all, be not too quick in circulating them, if you would not run the risk of becoming an instrument of calumny. Neither maintain strict silence when you hear the character of your friend or neighbour attacked, or made the subject of ridicule and scorn or hypocritical pity: step forward, and state all you know of the victim of malevolence. Make yourself, as far as truth claims and sanctions, the advocate and champion of him whom general



opinion charges and condemns,—careful in extenuating when not able to prove his entire innocence. Your mildness and kindliness of temper will prepossess even the accuser himself in your favour: he will feel convinced, from what he has witnessed, that, if required, you will advocate even *his* cause, should he likewise in turn be the man calumniated. You will thus gain the grateful affection of him also, who, by your means, amidst the raillery and scoffing of the whole assembly, has been treated with honour and esteem.

On the other hand, *examine with impartiality the conduct of him whom public opinion condemns with so much rigour.* Ascertain how his conduct has given cause for the unfavourable opinion expressed. If he is your friend or acquaintance, go to him, and employ all the means that delicacy permits, in order to open his eyes to the opinion formed by the world, and to a sense of his own conduct. If he is innocent, then come forward as the defender of his innocence; confound the calumny, but show charity towards the calumniator, if the circumstances can in part excuse his wrong. Unveil the truth, and correct the opinion created by prejudice.

In all cases, however, *prudently avoid the society of him who stands in bad repute, if you do not know him better than he has been judged by his contemporaries.* If your circumstances force you to hold

intercourse with him, avoid a more intimate connexion; bad company destroys insensibly good manners. Do not confide too much in the strength of your own virtue, nor calculate too much upon easily resisting the continual seduction of bad example and treacherous words. Avoid the temptation: to defy and dare the danger, is to expose yourself to ruin.

If you behold any of your friends, or those you may be acquainted with only, outraging the laws of propriety and decency, and exposing themselves to the condemnation of the world—if you find all your prayers and representations fail in reforming them, then act with independent determination and courage, and part from them. To find themselves forsaken by good and virtuous men, is the first punishment they must experience for their madness and folly. Say, with David, “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.” (Psalm i. 1).

You will thus not only preserve the purity of your own heart, that first treasure of life, but also of your good reputation, which ought to be ever sacred in your eyes, inasmuch as without it you cannot be of service or benefit to your fellow-creatures. It should ever be a sacred duty with you to preserve in all its purity the honour of

the name inherited from your forefathers, as the most precious portion of your patrimony.

Therefore, you cannot remain altogether indifferent *to what the opinion of the world may express about yourself*; and the duties it may impose upon you.

Above all things, when even you have nothing wherewith to reproach yourself, remember continually how inconstant men are in their opinion; that they praise this day what they condemned yesterday, and they honour to-morrow what they depreciated to-day; and, incessantly biassed and blinded by the appearance, they rarely perceive the reality of things. Never, therefore, make the world's opinion your idol; never esteem it for more than its value. You will thus save yourself much secret pain and vexation, and you will never become the sport of man's caprice.

If you are convinced within yourself of the purity of your intentions, and the justice and utility of your dealings, meet the clamours and outcries of the world with silence. Pursue your career, supported by the approbation of God and your own conscience; and, should your actions be misconceived by the whole world, they will not be misconstrued by God. If you are forced to submit, for the sake of the good cause, to insult, calumny, and persecution, do not be discouraged: without a

struggle there can be no victory. God and your own heart will compensate you for the hatred of your slanderers and enemies.

How many praiseworthy enterprises, which have been crowned with the blessings of all nations, would never have been formed nor accomplished ; how many valuable institutions and useful establishments, so worthy of our gratitude, would never have existed, if the courage and perseverance of their authors had yielded to the clamours of opposition produced by ignorance and intolerance. Elevate yourself, therefore, above the opinion of the world, and turn your eye towards Heaven, when you take upon yourself the charge of doing good.

The influence of worldly opinion ought only to divert and mislead little minds from the accomplishment of the good they undertake to perform. It is the peculiar quality of men, infirm in mind and heart, without confidence in Divine Providence or in their own strength, to prefer the approbation of blind mortals to that of God, who alone is all-powerful.

Alas ! there exist but too many of these unfortunate beings, who dread much more the judgment of men than the judgment of the Eternal. A sinner feels ashamed to confess his errors and reform his conduct ; his vanity forces him to continue on the

road which, sooner or later, must conduct him to ruin. He fears to render himself ridiculous in the eyes of the world: he dreads the triumph of his enemies; and, rather than yield to a momentary humiliation, he prefers the malediction of his conscience and the repentance that awaits him in eternity. In order to conceal his first error, he commits a fresh fault; and, in order to keep secret this fault, he has recourse to crime: he entangles himself more and more in the web of sin, until he at length is no longer able to extricate himself. Fearing to become the mockery of the world, he makes himself the object of its aversion and horror.

Another, the victim of vanity, in order to maintain his reputation and rank in society, gives himself up to lavish expenditure, which soon exceeds his income. He wishes to appear more exalted than his station in life justifies; he sacrifices to the opinion of the world the comfort and happiness of his family; he yields to this idol his internal peace and tranquillity, until at last all his resources fail him, and expose him to public contempt and pity. Alas! how often are we forced to witness the fear and dread of public opinion produce such melancholy and desperate results, that men, instructed in their youth to take it for their guide and rule through life, have at last in their madness put an end to their own existence!



O, my soul ! fear not the eye of man, as long as thou knowest and feelest thou hast not to dread the all-searching eye of God. Thou knowest that calumny has not spared the most noble and elevated mortals ; and innocence itself is not beyond the reach of its venom.

Nevertheless, however inconstant and fickle human opinion may be, you must not show yourself insensible to its effects as soon as you find it may deprive you of the esteem of honest men. If your honour is attacked by serious and grave accusations, you owe it as a duty to yourself and your connexions, to defend it, for your silence would only tend to confirm those charges.

Your good name and reputation are treasures you have inherited from your forefathers, and which you must transmit as inviolate as you have received them, to your descendants. They will conciliate the confidence even of strangers, although yourself personally unknown to them. These precious possessions banish from your society all vicious and unprincipled men, and you gain thereby the affection of the friends of virtue. Thanks to the public confidence, which by this means you gain, you are rendered strong in your weakness, rich in your poverty, and excite and receive universal sympathy when in misfortune. “ A good name is rather to be chosen than great



riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold." (Proverbs xxii. 1.)

In general, it is much better not to expose yourself to the opinion of the world. Happy is he who can pass his days in retirement and obscurity, and whose name is only mentioned and introduced within the limits of a chosen circle of friends. The venomous tongue of slander and envy attacks everywhere the individual whose merits or happiness renders him an object of observation and attention.

*When you perceive that the opinion of the world is unfavourable to you, search and examine within yourself if some error may not exist, to deprive you of the public esteem.* If you discover the error, arm yourself with courage, and struggle with the defect which dishonours you ; for it is a grand fault to repulse the esteem, the confidence, and good feeling of virtuous men. You deprive yourself of a most powerful means to merit good of mankind, and to live happily amongst honest men.

Remember that the opinion of the world, when it is founded upon one of your real faults, never changes, but erects upon the very grave itself a monument of dishonour. The most powerful monarchs even bend and humble themselves before the force of public opinion, when it pronounces truth ; it judges tyrants, revenges abused virtue,

and acts as the severest scourge over the head of those instruments of iniquity whom it is not in the power of man to bring before another tribunal.

If you are ignorant of the causes which have deprived you of the esteem of honest and well-meaning men, and of the motives which have influenced your friends to shut their hearts against you, ascertain and demand from one of the most sincere amongst them for what you are blamed, and whence the coldness that exists? But if he fears to mortify you, perhaps, by stating the whole truth, or he is dazzled by his friendship, and gives but a faint outline of the reason, then lend your ear to the words of your enemy: from him you may assuredly cull the truth, especially amidst his highly-coloured and exaggerated detail of your faults.

Never, O my Heavenly Father, does innocence feel more conscious of its worth, than when it is persecuted and loaded with affliction. But if I may only appear innocent and pure in Thine eye, O Thou who readest the soul, then how sweet to me shall be the cup of sorrow!

There may be men who harbour hostile feelings towards me. The meanest among them can injure me; for we ought not to despise even the weakest of our enemies. But have I used any effort myself to merit their esteem? Have I taken any

step towards a reconciliation? Alas! I am forced, even in Thy presence, O my Heavenly Father, to confess that my heart in secret nourishes feelings of hatred and anger.

But henceforth away; hence with these criminal thoughts and feelings; let them be banished from my soul, consecrated to Thee, All Holy! First, let me be good and just; and then let me try, by generosity and kindness, to disarm my adversaries of their enmity towards me.

Help me, O my Heavenly Father, in this important work; and let Thy Holy Spirit penetrate my soul, and the image of Jesus, who innocently suffered, elevate my strength and courage.

May no malediction from the mouth of an unreconciled fellow-creature hover over my death-bed; and may my coffin not be followed to its grave by the tears of any human creature whom, whilst living, I might have lessened and calumniated by my imprudent and mischievous tongue!

Lord, my God, and soon to be my Judge! far from desiring to incense or exasperate my fellow-creature, it shall be my endeavour, full of charity for his infirmities, to bring him back with mildness to the path of virtue, so that on the day of judgment I may receive thy mercy! AMEN.



## THE TRIUMPH OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

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ST. LUKE, XII. 32.

“Fear not, little flock,” said Jesus one day to his disciples, with prophetic majesty; “for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

MORE than three hundred years had passed away amidst the grand and mighty struggles of the church; for more than three hundred years the Christians had endured the most shameful injury and persecution; innumerable martyrs had perished amidst every possible torture that the brain of man could invent, and many had sunk and died in misery: but after these three hundred years of sufferings, the persecuted Church rose again, and stood triumphant upon the earth. The Christians became inhabitants of all parts of the world; great numbers were distributed amongst the ranks of the Roman troops; many were appointed judges, and were mixed up with the head functionaries of the empire, and the most distinguished philosophers

and learned men of the age. The very throne itself of the emperors was surrounded by Christians, and in number they nearly equalled the heathens themselves, by whom they were continually persecuted. A Christian emperor was alone wanting upon the Oriental throne, in order to effect a general reform; and this emperor appeared in the person of Constantine.

Surrounded even from his early youth by Christians, this prince had become familiar with the gospel of Jesus Christ; and the first impressions of such a tender age were never effaced completely from the mind. Christians had faithfully adhered to him, and furnished him with assistance, during the many persecutions he had in early life experienced, and he testified his gratitude by protecting their faith. His ambition had long been held in restraint; and the Christian army fought bravely for him, as soon as they were made aware of his favourable inclinations towards their doctrine. He succeeded, accordingly, in triumphing over all those powers that disputed his right to the dominion of the Roman empire, and gratefully acknowledged that he owed his success to the God of the Christians, and not to the idols of stone worshipped by the heathens; in which belief he was confirmed by a singular event.

One day, when he was about to give battle to



one of his ambitious rivals for the imperial crown, and the attack had already partially commenced, he cast his eyes towards heaven with doubtful anxiety, when, behold, the rays of the mid-day sun presented the form of a cross, the venerated symbol of Christianity. Although the appearance of such a meteor is nothing extraordinary, nor contrary to the laws of nature, as even in modern times we have seen the rays of the moon, refracted in the hidden cloud, present the sign of the cross—still it is a phenomenon not less rare. Constantine, who had never before witnessed nor heard of such a sign, and who was placed in a position so critical that doubtless his thoughts turned towards God and his crucified Son, interpreted this cross into a heavenly omen of victory, and continued the battle with renewed courage until he vanquished the enemy. This circumstance, which was afterwards regarded as an undoubted miracle, became mixed up with various traditions and legends, the greater part of which were, no doubt, purely fictitious.

However this may be, the conqueror henceforth declared himself for the Christian religion, which he embraced at once by having himself baptised. He enjoined all those who would possess his favour to be converted to Christianity. When, for the first time, as the supreme and absolute monarch, his sceptre extended over the entire Roman empire,



Christianity became the sole and exclusive religion of the state in both the east and western countries. Such was the end of all the persecution, after a sanguinary war of three hundred years. The name of Christian became now a public title of honour, and an introduction to official rank and dignity; the cross was publicly planted where hitherto the altars of heathenism had flourished, and was borne in all its splendour on the imperial banners, whilst the temples of the false gods were changed into temples of the invisible and living God.

This epoch was one of the most important for the gospel of Christ upon earth. Its truths found a support in the secular authority; not only individuals, but whole nations, were converted and baptized. The Christian religion soon became one the most widely circulated throughout the world; and, in a terrestrial point of view, secured from destruction and the assaults of unbelief.

But, whilst we have here cause to admire the ways of Providence, we must not conceal from ourselves the fact that Christianity lost in internal dignity and purity what it gained in the external lustre of its triumphs; for many hundreds and thousands of those who now suddenly became Christians possessed but a very imperfect knowledge of the fundamental truths of the faith

announced by Jesus and his apostles. They adopted the name of Christians less through conviction of the glory attached to the revelations of the Messiah, than through a desire to please the emperor, and to avoid exposing themselves, by obstinate perseverance in idolatry, to ill usage and punishment. They fancied they had become Christians by baptism alone, and had performed all the duties of religion by repeating a prayer, a confession of belief, attending the churches, and participating in the holy sacrament. But, Christians outwardly, they were still heathens at heart. Their minds remained rude and superstitious; they abjured none of their vices, but, on the contrary, many rejoiced in the hope of obtaining after death supreme happiness, whilst their existence on earth might be passed in the full enjoyment of every sensual pleasure. In their deplorable state of ignorance, they imagined that faith alone was salvation; and that Jesus, by his death upon the cross of Golgotha, had purified them from all sin.

The emperor himself, a newly-converted Christian, who in subsequent times was not only styled the *Great*, but also the *Holy* or *Saint* Constantine, because he had made the Christian church triumphant, and had elevated the bishops to power and influence, remained inwardly an unchristian heathen; his ambition, his domineering and cruel

spirit, remained the same. He gave himself up to the most dreadful excesses of a suspicious and vindictive character, and shed the blood of many of his innocent subjects. In order to obtain his object, he became the greatest criminal in the immense empire he ruled, and sacrificed even his own relations the moment he felt the slightest suspicion against them. He broke the most sacred engagements, as soon as he perceived that by so doing he might derive advantage or benefit. Such was his character. But he did not the less encourage the adoption of the Christian religion. He confided into the hands of the Christians the first offices of his empire, and granted to the priests and bishops their rights and liberty, together with considerable revenues. He built new and magnificent churches, and transferred to the Christians the heathen temples, and substituted for the heathen figures the symbols of Jesus Christ, his apostles, and other pious men, whose acts in the cause of faith had obtained for them the title of saints. He introduced with strict zeal the general observance of divine worship on the Sabbath-day, and encouraged and promoted, by every possible means, universal veneration and love for the Christian church; but he forgot and neglected all that was most sacred in the religion of Jesus Christ. The emperor himself knew not, or would not know, the

true spirit of religion, because he hoped to obtain eternal happiness by a path more convenient than by a struggle against his passions and vices. Thence it was that, seeing his end approach, he caused himself to be baptized, calculating by that to purify himself without trouble from all his sins.

Oh! how much had already the faith of Christians deviated from its primitive simplicity, dignity, and wisdom! With how much abuse and superstition was it still to be overshadowed in the obscurity of future ages! Even now, had one of the disciples or apostles of Jesus reappeared on earth to be a witness of the state of the Christian church, in how very few Christians would he have recognised the character of the true disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, and how different the Christianity of that period to the doctrine preached by the Saviour! “Thou only art holy, O Lord,” saith the Scripture, (Rev. xv. 4); and yet, now men were made saints already by men upon earth. “God is love!” said John; and now the various Christian sects persecuted each other with fire and sword. “God is a spirit, and those that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth!” said Jesus; and now the praying multitude were to be seen prostrate before the bones of martyrs, the images of mortals transformed into saints, and crucifixes made by their own hands. “When ye

pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking!" said the Son of God, (Matt. vi. 7); and now the crowd were heard to repeat in the temples and over the tombs of martyrs, long prayers, learnt by heart—prayers which many among them neither understood nor felt, but by which, nevertheless, they believed they served God and obtained salvation. The Saviour of the world had once preached against the error of the Samaritans and the Jews, of whom the former imagined that Jehovah preferred being worshipped on Mount Gerizim, and the latter at Jerusalem. "Ye worship ye know not what;" said the Lord; "but the hour cometh when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in the truth," (St. John iv. 22, 23;) and yet one church became more holy than another, and more favoured and fertile in miracles. Jesus said to his disciples, "God is the Father of all in heaven, and ye are his children, approach him with filial confidence; all that ye may ask in my name, he will grant you;" and now God was no longer regarded as the Father of his creatures, but as a monarch, who, like an earthly ruler, was surrounded by his counsellors and favourites, through whose intercession alone it was possible to obtain a favour from the Sovereign of the world.



Alas, how deformed had the religion of Jesus become ! From year to year it became more and more corrupted by heathen ideas and the old superstitions of idolatry, and more confused by the subtilties of Christian writers and the abuses of sacerdotal egotism. In order to gain over the heathens to Christian worship, they endowed it with greater magnificence than had ever attended the heathen worship of idols. They took less pains to gain the heart and conscience by religious truths, than to captivate the senses and to dazzle and fascinate the eye and the ear. Less attention was paid to the propagation of the spirit of Christianity than to the multiplication of proselytes, and thus more and more of the pagan ceremonies, and even sacrifices for the dead, were introduced and adopted.

In such manner the triumph of the Christian church was not the triumph of faith ; the victory of the church was not the victory of Christianity, for the religious sects, always disputing together, regarded each other with a hate even deeper than that they bore to the heathens. At the period when Constantine came forward, and strengthened and supported the faith with his imperial power, the chief sect, which contained in itself the greatest number of communities, and possessed at the imperial court the most powerful patrons, took



to itself the title of the supreme and reigning church, and condemned all the rest. Whoever, therefore, refused to submit to the doctrines and discipline of this church, were rejected from the community as heretics and apostates. It assumed the name of the only existing orthodox church, and it soon became an adopted principle, that beyond the pale of this church there was no salvation, and that it alone possessed the power of redemption. Thus was established, on the one hand, the unity of the Catholic or universal church, and on the other was founded an eternal wall of separation between itself and all other Christian churches, which held themselves to be, nevertheless, in possession of the true faith and salvation.

The Christian priesthood, however, henceforth gained considerably in power, honours, and riches, as soon as Christianity became the religion of the state. Formerly, there had not prevailed among themselves any great difference in rank; the most virtuous and wise were the most esteemed and honoured. Subsequently, the number of Christian communities having become augmented, one of the priests was appointed inspector, or bishop, over a certain number of their body, and received at the same time certain privileges, to enable him to fulfil the duties of his office with more efficacy.

Those that dwelt in large and opulent towns, could calculate upon larger contributions from the hands of the faithful. Very soon, however, the bishops arrogated to themselves greater power, and set themselves up in their meetings as the only and exclusive legislators of the church. Equality soon vanished from among them, and ecclesiastical pride, or obsequious flattery, soon invented fresh and more imposing titles. Archbishops were now appointed, whose authority extended over the bishops; and then were elected patriarchs, to whom the archbishops themselves became subservient, whose number was in proportion to the number of the principal towns of the empire. They presided and pronounced judgment upon all ecclesiastical affairs, and the spiritual was united with the temporal power. There were patriarchs at Jerusalem and Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, and Rome. The simple humility of the apostles disappeared, and the successors of Jesus Christ, yielding to the sway of their worldly passions, made themselves princes of the earth.

Until the period of Constantine, the first Christian emperor, Rome had been the capital of the empire. He, however, built a new metropolis more closely approximating to the oriental world, which he called after his own name. Nevertheless, Rome continued to maintain the character it

had held for a thousand years. Thence it was that in a short time the patriarch of Rome, as well as the patriarch of Constantinople, strove to establish a pre-eminence above all the other patriarchs, in which they were assisted by the emperors and their chief counsellors, as well as by the ignorance of the age. The Christians, converted from their Paganism, still imbued with gross material ideas, worshipped the saints as gods, bestowing on their priests and their leaders the most blind and superstitious veneration. This feeling they now transferred to the archbishops and patriarchs. None could deny that the unity of the Christian church required the unity of the ecclesiastical head. To this end the patriarch of Rome made the first attempt. Peter was proclaimed the prince of the apostles; it was declared that at Rome he had himself been doctor and bishop of the primitive Christians; that the subsequent bishops of that city were the successors of Peter; and that, in consequence, a bishop, a patriarch of Rome, ought, with the office of that great apostle, to inherit his jurisdiction and influence, and be the chief and father, or pope of Christianity. Thence arose a long dispute between the patriarch of the east and the patriarch of the west, and thus was produced the schism which still exists between the Greek and the Roman church.

Such was the form assumed by the Christian church after its triumph. If we do not confound this church with the faith revealed by Jesus, but regard it as the external relation of the Christian belief with the world, the form it has taken will neither shock nor surprise us, when we take into consideration the barbarous state of that period. Had the faith remained simple and pure in the bosom of the church, it would be of little import whether this heavenly fruit were presented in a vessel of wood or gold. When the breast of man contains a heart which beats with true piety, what matter is it whether that breast be covered with rags or purple and silk cloth? It is through a false zeal that we blame the splendour of the ceremonies of worship; this splendour has often been of service in awakening noble sentiments in vulgar souls. Why should we upbraid pious kings and princes because they clothe themselves splendidly, and are surrounded by earthly grandeur, instead of presenting an appearance of indigence? Without the unity of the imposing power of the church, Christianity would certainly have become entirely degenerated in the later ages of universal barbarity. But this tie riveted still closer the bond of union in the last remnants of Christianity. The temporal authority of the spiritual head served as a counterpoise against the tyranny of the savage

and cruel princes who subsequently appeared, and checked their despotism. The unity of the church, and the influence of its spiritual head, assisted not a little to protect the sciences, which were all but annihilated, and to unite together the warlike and hostile nations. This unity contributed towards the preservation of the liberty of Europe, and greatly aided in preventing this portion of the world from sinking into the state of superstition and slavery under which, even to the present day, the majority of the nations in the East are still groaning. Everything is useful and salutary in its proper time. Short-sighted man may perhaps find cause to lament and deplore many things which to him individually seem monstrous evils for the moment; but if they are considered in connexion with the whole together, they will appear indispensable and salutary, and command the respect and admiration of the more wise and rational amongst mankind, as the dispensations of Divine Providence.

The triumph of the Christian religion over innumerable persecutors was not accomplished, it is true, without prejudice to the cause of the true faith. But in granting that thousands of heathens have remained heathens, even after baptism and under the cross itself, adhering still to all that is sensual, we must nevertheless acknowledge, on



the other hand, that at least entire nations have been led also to the path of true salvation, if not to their own profit, yet for the eventual happiness of their descendants. If we confess that Christendom in general received, instead of Christianity, only superstition and ceremony, we cannot deny that amongst these millions of apparent Christians, thousands of true and pious men have followed the path of piety in silence, and have invoked their Heavenly Father in spirit and in truth; and let it suffice that this venerated body have passed on before us with their virtues! Their mortal elements have fallen into dust in the course of centuries, but their sacred light shines forth with renewed lustre, and we who live at this hour enjoy its beams in all their brilliancy.

Thus was accomplished for us also what Jesus promised to his disciples: "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."—AMEN.







## DOMESTIC WORSHIP.

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EPHESIANS, v. 15—21.

“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil; wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord: giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”

How sublime and affecting is the contemplation of the scene in which a pious family is engaged in offering up unitedly their thoughts and feelings to the most holy and exalted Being—to the Almighty! What man is he whose soul would not be moved at witnessing the soft tears of maternal affection roll down the cheeks of the mother when praying for the life, the health, and the well-being of her cherished and fondly beloved children? Who could behold with indifference a venerable father, surrounded by all the members of his household, and with uncovered head, beseeching for his family,

blessings from the King of kings, the Arbiter of our destinies? Where is the man whose heart is not affected, when he beholds a child, blooming in all the grace of innocence, lift up its little hands towards its invisible Father, and stammer forth its juvenile appeal in favour of its parents, its brothers and sisters, and the companions of its pastimes?

In former times—it is not to be denied—when the customs of the people were more simple, there prevailed in the palaces of princes, as well as in the more humble establishments of the subjects, the practice of domestic worship, which in our days has become more limited and weakened; but it must also be admitted, that in those times there reigned amongst families an energy, a generosity, and an uprightness, which have now nearly entirely vanished: there was less dissipation of life in vain amusements; cunning and egotism were more rarely known; whilst there existed more domestic peace, serenity of soul, and more courage of devotion for grand and useful enterprises.

A so-termed refinement of manners has caused the former feeling of piety to disappear from the bosom of many families: and for the real and honest enjoyments of life, have been substituted frivolous and noisy distractions. A happiness has been sought externally, which it has not been possible to preserve internally. By a senseless

weakness, endeavours have been made to exhibit a certain force of spirit, in disdaining to profess, at least publicly, religious feelings. Dissipated or indecent assemblies have been attended without any reluctance, whilst a secret fear restrained from entering the temple of God; immoral works dedicated to corruption have been studied with delight, whilst a blush would have been produced at being found reading a book of devotion or morality, or even the holy Scriptures themselves. Insensibly, many men have degraded their mind whilst thinking to ennoble it; anxious to attach themselves to the Great (according to the world's estimation thereof), they neglected to draw near to the Creator of the universe; they have shared in the enjoyments of the animal without reason, forgetting that man, a citizen of the world of mind, can only elevate himself by his union with God, who is the greatest of all spirits.

Thus, the levity and immorality of many fathers, the often blind folly of many mothers, have destroyed the happiness, peace, and prosperity of a great number of respectable family circles. Many among them, made prudent by such experience, will doubtless return to the simple life of their ancestors: may they also imitate them in their virtues! Then again may be introduced into the bosom of their homes that

*family worship*, forgotten by so many, which is the source of domestic happiness, of consolation in affliction, and of the peace of soul in the accomplishment of the daily duties of life.

Public worship is, without doubt, of very great importance ; but it easily degenerates into a vain routine and mere matter of business, because amidst the many distractions of daily life, the zeal of the heart becomes cooled, when the mind is no longer occupied with the Supreme Being beyond the walls of the temple. The delightful impressions with which we are inspired by a Divine word are, alas ! but too speedily and too easily effaced. We forget, with a levity which strikes even ourselves with astonishment; the most sacred vows, and the most sincere tears of repentance, when from the house of God we return to the sphere of our daily engagements, as to quite another world, and throughout the whole of another week, we neither remember, nor desire to remember or dwell upon, our repentance and our resolutions. And are we then only Christians on a Sunday ? Is not every day in the week a day of the Lord, a solemn day ?

Nevertheless, while we advocate *domestic worship*, we desire to prevent all misunderstanding and false interpretation. We are far from recommending that it should consist in meetings more

or less numerous, of different individuals and families, having for their object of assemblage the celebration together of private worship. For although such meetings present nothing at all that is blameable in themselves, still there may result therefrom, to society, consequences of much evil tendency, which in his station as citizen, the disciple of Christ ought to avoid and prevent.

The Christian must respect the order established in civil life ; he must respect the opinion and sentiments of those with whom the ties of society unite him. Men, even the most rude and uncultivated, are never offended at homage offered to the Deity ; but they may be so at the manner in which it is practised. To desire to excite attention and become distinguished in this respect, is often productive of murmurs, and even suspicion. Christian devotion does not display itself before the eyes of the whole world, but retires in solitude to the obscurity of the temple ; whilst the Pharisee, standing at the corner of the street, is seen by all men.—(Matthew, vi. 6.)

But, on the other hand, how charming, innocent, and pure, is daily worship in the limited and confidential circle of an individual family ! There, the father and mother become in a manner the ministers of the Most High ; and the retired and obscure chamber wherein we receive the benefits of our



Heavenly Father—that spot which witnesses our moments of sorrow and our joy, where we experience the alternation of health and sickness, and where, perhaps, we may be placed upon our bed of death—becomes transformed into the temple of the Lord.

There we find assembled, after the refreshing rest of night, the small society, united by the sacred ties of blood. In the golden hour of morn, the same circle pronounces a gentle prayer of thanksgiving towards the throne of eternal goodness; and in the evening, it again meets together, happy from the labours of the day and at the repose about to be enjoyed—its last contemplations directed towards the Sovereign Protector of mankind. And while, amid the profound darkness of the heavens, and in the immeasurable expanse of space, thousands of stars proclaim the power of God; while, perhaps, thousands of worlds unknown to us, celebrate the glory of His name, our prayer ascends likewise through the silent night to Him, and *He* hears and receives it.

These hours consecrated to devotion exercise their influence, also, upon the infant itself which witnesses them. As yet, that child knows of no other superior being beyond its parents, and it beholds them filled with veneration and humility at the single name of the invisible God. It feels



penetrated with the same respect ; and the force of example fills its young soul with sentiments of religion, before even its reason is capable of giving an account of the emotions of its heart. Let it, therefore, be an important object, to accustom a child, from the most tender age, to a humble and reverential attitude during prayer, that sublime communion with God, the Creator and Preserver of all that breathes. The child may not, perhaps, as yet, comprehend the sense and meaning of the prayer ; but it will understand the feeling which is expressed by the humble look, the clasped hands, and pious meditation. It is only by external signs and the senses, that the mind of the child receives the first impressions. It will thus already be acquainted with the sweet feeling of love to God, when, at the age of awakened reason, you shall instruct it in the foundations and importance of the religion of Jesus Christ.

In order that prayer may operate efficaciously upon the soul, we should abstain from repeating each day the same words. It ought never to become a mere routine matter of exercise, but it should spring from the heart, and proceed from the mind. The mouth can repeat without trouble, and without any participation with the spirit, *formulæ* which custom has engraven upon the memory.

To address a prayer to God without thinking of Him, is only to insult Him. Devotion is nothing when the mind is occupied elsewhere, and distraction overcomes the soul, in spite of itself, each time that reflection is not brought into play. A simple thought addressed to God from the depth of the soul, an inaudible sigh or an emotion of the heart, is far beyond the most eloquent prayer pronounced by the lips.

If the father or the mother is not always in a situation, or in a disposition to utter a prayer analogous to the occasion, there are many books of worship, written by distinguished pious men, eminent for their talent, from which a choice may be made. They second and fortify our devotion by the beauty of their thoughts; and their sentiments and reflections become our own. The prayer made in common amongst the members of a family, is preserved for a long time afterwards in the soul, like celestial harmony. Left alone to ourselves, we also address, in the silence of our retreat, our secret prayers to that God who knows the condition and the wants of our heart.

Therefore, it is a noble duty for pious mothers to teach in good time their children to form, without study and restraint, a short prayer, in invoking their Father, who is in heaven; and not to allow the prayer of childhood, the expression of its own

sentiments, to be learned from memory. What can be more touching for a mother, or a father, than to hear their child, before it sinks into its happy slumbers, murmur in sweet accents its simple petition, addressed to God, and repeat to its invisible friend and guardian a few words which come from the heart!

But the domestic devotion of Christian families is not confined to the single duty of prayer; there are a thousand opportunities presented to practise this worship with touching simplicity. It is not necessary to have continually and at every moment, the name of God in our mouth. To be incessantly repeating "Lord! Lord!" may become an injurious habit. When in action, let us be fervent in spirit, entirely devoted to our work, our occupations, our duties, at home as well as abroad; but in praying, let us give ourselves wholly to prayer. The human mind is too limited; it cannot multiply itself, and if pre-occupied with temporal cares, it cannot dedicate itself all at once to the interests of another world.

To be always pronouncing, without intermission, the name of God, is in a manner profaning it. Christians, endowed with tender and delicate feelings, imitate, in this respect, the Jews, by whom the name of Jevovah was held to be so sacred, that they feared to degrade it in pro-

nouncing it too often. Instead of naming God, let us praise Providence and Nature ; for what do we understand by these words, if it be not the Author of Nature,—*Him* whose providence governs the universe ?

When the hollow notes of the funeral knell echo forth, and announce to our ear the departed spirit of a friend and neighbour, and the mourning train pass before us, bearing the last remains to their final place of rest, the pious husband and his faithful companion of life, moved by a melancholy foreboding, press each other's hand ; they are penetrated by the thought of eternity, and they are by that united more firmly to each other. Their faith, their hope, is directed towards Him who watches over man ; and this is an act of domestic worship !

The spring bestrews the earth with all its thousands of variegated blossoms ; the lark chants its lay as it soars beyond the clouds ; the nightingale sends forth its notes from the bush ; and a wondrous illumination lights up the whole surrounding scenery of hill and dale. Filled with holy enthusiasm, the father explains to his son the miracles of the creation ; he shews and points out to him the traces of sovereign wisdom in the order of nature, regulated by infinite goodness. At the view of these miracles, a holy joy fills their

souls, moved by the works of the Almighty; and this is also an example of domestic devotion!

Every family has hours of leisure, when all the members of which it is composed are found united together. Doubtless, it is agreeable to sweeten these hours by those entertainments proper to refresh and relax the mind; but it is also delightful to sanctify them by thoughts and meditations more serious and elevated. Therefore, they read a work of devotion, a moral sermon, a book written for the improvement of the mind and heart; some select passages from the Bible, easy to be comprehended,—the psalms of the prophet, or the life of our Saviour. The attentive family surround the reader; their hearts become moved; reason becomes enlightened; virtue appears in all its beauty, and vice in all its deformity; we become better; the soul approaches the Deity;—and here, also, is domestic worship!

These few examples shew how numerous are the opportunities to practise family worship; but, therefore, it is not necessary to constantly exhort, instruct, encourage to do good, and edify at every moment; for uniformity and excess may render troublesome and inconvenient the lessons of piety. No, ye fathers and mothers! and all ye who wish to propagate with gain the religion and love of God, the most beautiful lesson, and the most effi-



cacious instruction at every hour, is—*your own life*. Your example will be more powerful than your precepts, and your actions will produce more fruit than your doctrine.

An affectionate father, ever active, and a friend of order; a tender, careful, economical, and amiable mother; obedient and noble-minded children; industrious and faithful servants: these are a continual offering to God. Their conduct, constantly honest and sincere, is a fruit of the love of God whom they nourish in their heart. Their life is the faithful mirror in which is reflected the piety of their souls. Whilst the tumult of the world soon destroys, for the most part, the holy intentions which public worship may have given birth to on the Sunday, they are more frequently nourished with love in the retirement of the domestic sanctuary. Whilst we frequently forget, with inconceivable levity, the grand resolutions and the generous designs formed publicly in the time of misfortune, domestic worship entertains them nearly always in all their vigour.

Private devotion exerts upon our souls a tender and powerful influence, and it places us in the right point of view whence we ought to consider the world. By it our terrestrial existence is placed in its true light; the occurrences and the events of life are placed in connection with the hopes of

eternity ; and when we approach God, it is not as strangers, but as children accustomed to live with their father.

Through the influence of the worship offered up to the Divinity in the bosom of our family, or in solitude, we become always more firm and more devoted to good. With a more noble conduct, we occupy ourselves more constantly with the happiness of others ; we look as if into a heaven in the bosom of domestic peace : and we avoid, with more care, all those improprieties committed through forgetfulness of the duties of man towards the All Holy. A calm and irreproachable conscience sheds serenity over the mind ; and the pleasure of existence is rendered more lively, because it is made pure.

Yes, my God, my Father, my all, I appreciate fully the happiness of not being like a stranger in Thy presence ; and I should be unworthy to live if I allowed a single day to pass away without thinking of Thee. Thy Son, Jesus Christ, prayed not only in the Temple ; he prayed in the dwelling of his friends and in the retreat of Gethsemane. And I, also, the child of Thy love, will invoke Thee in my dwelling, in the solitude of the fields, far from my home and from my native land. Thy holy presence shall transform my retreat into a sanctuary, wherein I may worship Thee in spirit and in truth.

The spirit of sanctity purifies all. There, where Thou art, all that is not pure must disappear. Thou dwellest with me, and will not the serenity of heavenly peace reign in my house? Could I desecrate by sin the peaceful chamber in which I have so often invoked Thee with ardour? Could I curse the spot in which I have implored Thy blessing? Could fraud and falsehood profane the spot on which I have so many times presented myself before the Judge of my thoughts? Witness of my ardent prayers, shall this spot be also witness of my hatred, of my envy, and evil passions?

No, no, O my Heavenly Father! whither should I turn my trembling looks, or my sorrowful and shame-struck heart, if in my own abode, in the most retired spot of my own dwelling, I should have to blush in Thy presence? In what spot of the earth should I find happiness, if my sins and my conscience should transform into a hell the home in which I ought to find a heaven?

I know Thy blessings, the fruit of domestic devotion, and I will try to participate in them, and cause them to fall upon my own home. May my heart always belong to God, and God will always be my God.

Awake or asleep, Thou art ever present to my mind. And when once, sooner or later, in this dwelling in which I so often approach Thee by

prayer, I shall fall asleep in Thy arms, Father of Love ! Thou shalt be my *ending* thought ; and in those new heavens, in that more delightful life, where my soul shall again awake from the sleep of the tomb, my *first* thought shall be on *Thee*. There, when a new world shall shed around me its splendour and glory, my God will not be to me an unknown God ; for here it is, in *His* arms, that I sink into sleep, and it is *there*, in His arms, that I shall awake. That tender Father, who protects my soul during this short life, will be still my Father in eternity.—AMEN.





## CHRISTIAN MAGNANIMITY.

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ST. MATTHEW, v. 44—48.

“But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you ; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven : for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye ? Do not even the publicans the same ? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others ? Do not even the publicans so ? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

Too often, alas ! have I been forced to witness man in his degradation ; but when have I beheld him in all his noble greatness ? Too often have I seen him abandon himself to a sensual and material life, occupied alone in studying how to gain his subsistence by labour, to possess more temporal riches, and clothe himself more sumptuously than his neighbour. I have observed him place the dependence of his joy and delight, either in the vain and arrogant opinion he has formed of him-



self, in the splendour and prodigality displayed in his entertainments, or in the exercise of power and authority over his inferiors. I have seen him unceasingly engaged in improving his external state, and scarcely deigning to bestow a thought upon the moral amelioration of his soul, as if it was merely an object of secondary consideration. I have beheld him cultivating his mind with the object of acquiring talents which might place him in a position to pursue his career in the world with skill and dexterity, as if God had not endowed his soul with so many noble and elevated faculties for any other purpose but merely that he might become the most cunning and crafty, but also the most dangerous of beings. I have seen him yield himself a slave to his humour and passion, as if it were honourable never to conquer and overcome his desires and inclinations, but to resemble and bring himself as nearly as possible upon a level with the brute creation, insensible alike to reason and persuasion. I have certainly seen him profess a religion, not from any desire of the heart, but merely in order to conform to rule and custom, as if it were sufficient to follow and imitate the ceremonies pursued by habit, to ensure the approbation of the ruler of the world, the sovereign judge and arbitrator of our destiny. In fine, I have beheld him convert the religion of

Jesus Christ into a mantle of honour in order to cover his vices, and as a foundation upon which to support his upbraiding conscience, in depending upon the merits of our Saviour, and calculating that the sacrifice offered for the expiation of sin, is sufficient to secure and preserve him from condemnation.

Alas! into how low a state of degradation does man sink! He carries within him an unquenchable desire and longing after happiness; and yet, notwithstanding, he is never happy, because he precipitates himself into the abyss, as if impelled forward by some invisible power. Ah! truly it is by an invisible power; for it is the force of his passions which drag him on, and which for ever destroy the peace and happiness of the soul.

Where then shall we find the man who presents himself as such in all his greatness, and such as he has been formed in the image of God? Is it the christian, who, always observing his own acts, is cautious not to commit sin, and struggles with the emotions of his heart, to which he will not allow himself to yield, as is done by the majority of men?

We ought, without doubt, to show respect to that man who is sufficiently wise not to submit to the dominion of his passions, nor to make himself dependent upon ambition, vanity, voluptuousness, nor angry excitement; such a man is free even in

slavery, and is a monarch surrounded by servants who revere him for his dignity. He is respected, because no external power can make him yield; his character is not changed by prosperity, neither is he cast down in adversity. He himself remains unshaken amidst all the storms around him, but causes others to yield to him, because he is able to overcome his emotions, and the desires of his heart, so that they exercise no influence whatever upon his resolutions. He is more worthy of admiration than even the conqueror, who by the aid of subject nations, overcomes other nations, but cannot triumph over himself; he is more worthy of admiration than the most distinguished men of science, art, and learning, whose productions are proclaimed to be marvellous, but who are not able to produce and establish within their own breast that harmony and concord so much esteemed in all their masterpieces.

But is self-command the last and highest degree of perfection to be attained by man?

If such was indeed the case, Jesus, who enlightened the world with his divine word, would neither have preached nor taught a superior doctrine to what had been already introduced by the sages of antiquity. Before Christ appeared in the world, the most virtuous and enlightened men had shown that self-knowledge and self-command

were the true means of attaining to the highest degree of human dignity. And further, they had in their own life given the most striking and convincing example of this knowledge and command; they had proved that it was by no means an imaginary dignity that it was in the power of man to obtain. Their life accorded with their doctrine; and even at the present day, the names of those generous mortals are honoured and venerated by the world. Such was their conduct, O ye backward and unwilling Christians, who fear to perform these sacred duties!—such was their course of life; and yet Jesus had not yet appeared to them; they only cherished an uncertain hope—they only felt a vague fear for that eternity and judgment, of which the certainty established by divine revelation opens to us a prospect producing equal delight and awe. Yes, such was their life, Christians; and yet these men were only heathens!

But Jesus appeared in the world in all the splendour of celestial wisdom; and he desired and demanded more.

He also commanded that each should examine himself; and, to avoid sin, it is indeed but too necessary to know *one's-self*. He also desired that man should vanquish himself in overcoming his inclinations; for he that is incapable of surmount-

ing them becomes subject to them, and excludes himself from the number of the disciples of Jesus Christ. But these duties were performed equally by the Pagans. They spared their enemies, worked for the happiness of their friends, hated the excesses of ambition, intemperance, and dissipation; they despised the pride of riches, the insatiableness of avarice, and the shameful consequences of egotism. But all these virtues together were still not Christian virtue.

Jesus has demanded more from man. He wishes they should become the resemblance of the Divinity; he desires a greatness of soul as extensive as it is in the nature of mortal to feel; in His eyes, it is not enough not to hate your enemy, for he says: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."



This is the elevation of soul which the Divine Instructor demands of us. It is not enough that we subdue and overcome ourselves, so that our inclinations lead us not astray to commit any improper act ; we ought, as far as it depends upon our own faculties, to disseminate good around us. It is not being sufficiently virtuous, not to neglect nor violate any duty ; virtue requires that, without regard to external considerations, and without any interested motive, and without exception of persons, we should labour for the general happiness of all, even for the happiness of our enemies.

Such is the greatness of mind required by Christianity ; such is the highest degree of human perfection. The truly wise man—a name which can only be given to the holy imitator of Jesus—feels himself above the artifices, intrigues, and passions of life ; whilst others only seek to satisfy their egotism, he only aspires to do good to all around him. Insensible to all offence and enmity, he will not allow himself to be influenced by either, nor prevented from doing good to those that hate him ; his revenge is pardon and oblivion. He holds in disdain the miserable ambition of vulgar mortals, who busy themselves all their life with seeking their sovereign happiness in the pleasures of the senses and vanity. For him, the sovereign good is *to be one with God*. Always

in command of himself, in order to preserve his heart pure and without reproach, he feels no hatred towards sinners ; he regards them as suffering patients, whose body oppresses and governs the soul : he considers them as insane mortals, whose erring minds suggest to them a false good as their aim, or select a false means for attaining a praiseworthy and useful object. Instead of hating, he pities them ; and he labours to enlighten them in diminishing the evils of error and ignorance. His heart is inaccessible to all the vulgar inclinations and desires of egotism and self-interest ; if he seeks to surpass other men in dignity, it is by no means through any wish to make himself a person of greater consideration ; this would not be aspiring to true greatness. He desires to effect good, but not with the view of a recompense ; for if he desired and demanded any reward, his virtue would no longer remain virtue, but would be transformed into selfishness and mercenary calculation. He loves virtue, because it is divine ; he aspires to perfection, because his heavenly Father is perfect. He desires to become one with God, because his soul has emanated from God, and because it wishes to return to the original source from which it sprung.

This is the real and true greatness of mind which Jesus demands from those that imitate him.

Benevolence and charity are the essence of that virtue which covers itself with a veil of modesty. Aspiring to all that is most exalted, it scorns all that is but dust and must return to dust. Immortality is its native sphere ; and it only regards the life of this world as a preparation for eternity. It respects all human institutions and social order, as a means of happiness ; but truth, justice, and benevolence are, in the eyes of the true Christian, above all institutions. Too often, men, blinded by the renown of their own works, lose sight of the real but distant object of virtue. God is everything for virtue in this world, because God is in all, and virtue itself is in him. It loves life, because life is an existence in God ; but it fears not death, because death is only a modification of existence.

Such, O divine Jesus, is thy religion—the religion thou hast revealed to us ; this is that greatness of soul which is the fruit of Christianity. But, alas ! what am I myself ? Have I, up to this moment, been a true Christian ? What have been my sentiments ? Are they really those of Christianity ? Alas ! weak and timid, I have wavered between vice and virtue, between nothing and reality. O Jesus, thy word comes like a ray of divine light upon my soul ; and I discover, at length, all the truth and meaning of that sublime thought : “ Be ye therefore per-

fect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

Thus, then, greatness of mind, with Christians, does not consist merely in the neglect and subduing of the body, in the complete mortification and decay of all desires and all the enjoyments of life. No, this body is the instrument God has given me to render my activity useful to the world; he will not permit me either to treat it with contempt or neglect; for thus I should deprive my soul of an important means, given to it by God himself in order to make it perfect. But, on the other hand, I must not treat or view it beyond its nature as a simple instrument. When I have provided for the health, strength, and activity of the body, then I have done everything I am bound to perform. Its external beauty and outward ornaments are only secondary objects, to which I must not attach too high a price, nor, above all, sacrifice its vigour. But that which directs the instrument is more important than the instrument itself; and it is the soul that governs the body, and that joyfully employs it for the noble object of general utility; no corporeal pain can check the progress of the great soul of the Christian when the object is contributing to the happiness of humanity, or defending and preserving its most precious possessions—faith, innocence, truth, and justice.

Greatness of mind in the Christian does not consist, therefore, in proudly disdaining all the enjoyments of life ; but these enjoyments are only the means of restoring his body and refreshing his necessary strength for useful labour. He seeks not to pursue continually the pleasures of the senses ; on the contrary, he never permits a day to pass without doing some good act. He sacrifices, if necessary, all his pleasures for one charitable deed ; and he will even gladly endure suffering and deprivation, if they procure him the means of making others happy.

Riches, honours, and rank are not, in his eyes, objects of contempt ; but they are still less objects worthy of his especial desires and solicitude. Such valuable and imposing possessions, so much idolised by man, can neither augment the happiness of a wise Christian when they fall to his share, nor diminish it when they may be taken from him. In his eyes, they are only regarded as auxiliary means of greater activity in the cause of benevolence and charity. He knows too well, that high dignities are precarious, testimonials of consideration are equivocal, and that all the gold of the world cannot procure or ensure to the soul lasting and durable happiness. He is always ready to renounce all personal advantage for the interest of his fellow-



creatures and the general welfare. He is prepared, if necessary, to sacrifice all his wealth for the universal diminution of the sufferings of humanity.

Greatness of soul in the Christian does not consist, certainly, in disdaining to defend his own rights, as well as those of his brethren, whenever menaced with danger. All the rights which are ensured to us by civil authority are the conditions of useful activity and the means for the exercise of charity. We must endeavour, by the voice of mildness or severity of the law, to bring back those to their duty who, by wickedness or error, threaten to deprive us of these means of doing good. We commonly term such our enemies; but the Christian has no enemy. The wise man may be exposed to contempt, hatred, envy, and persecution; but whilst even he is engaged in defending his rights, he still remains the friend of his adversary. Instead of shunning and avoiding him in anger and resentment, he pities him; he aids him when he can, and benefits him when opportunity presents itself; and when, eventually, he is forced to choose between suffering himself or committing an injustice, the choice is not difficult—he suffers!

It is in this spirit of unchangeable and universal charity, in imitation of the divine charity, that the

greatness of soul in the Christian shows itself with the greatest effect; he never grows cold through ingratitude; his benefits are bestowed upon his enemies as well as his friends; and he is better known and distinguished by his acts than by his words. At every hour, and in every occupation, he seeks to be as perfect, and to render himself as useful as his circumstances and power will permit; but it is in obscurity and in secret that he prefers to act, rather than before the public eye: but neither does he avoid the observation of man, as soon as he believes it useful to give a virtuous example.

In every situation he is placed in by Providence, he aspires to do that which is the most noble and pure. But he does not confine himself to the mere moral demonstration; his will is put into immediate force. He modestly conceals the good he performs, because in doing it he has not in view vain glory, and because he fears he may be praised for acting according to the simple duty of a Christian. A good action which seeks for applause ceases to be worthy of esteem; virtuous souls and God himself must disapprove of it. The real greatness of soul in the Christian can only attain its perfection, when, for the benefit of humanity, it makes every sacrifice without the knowledge of any other mortal. The true Christian who is con-

scious of his infirmities, and who struggles against them, cannot suppose that others are without zeal and activity in the work of virtue ; nothing is more painful to his feelings than to hear himself praised for the accomplishment of his duties ; this sort of praises prove that those who pronounce them know not themselves how to merit them ; and how unwelcome must be to us the praises from such mouths !

True virtue rises above the influence of every terror and malediction, as it is equally superior to all praise. Let us not be uneasy at what may be thought of us, but at what we are ourselves. Our interests rest all in our works, and not in opinion. The first are dependent upon ourselves ; the last is the sport of circumstances. The former are in connexion with our dignity, our perfection, and our happiness, and constitute the true greatness of the mind, which is far above this transitory life which we must soon abandon.

To aspire to this greatness of soul, is the object and aim of the children of God. To attain it, is by no means above human strength ; Jesus presented an example of the greatest virtues, in order to show that an elevated desire cannot aspire to perfection in vain. Excited and inspired by his example, numerous Christians have marched in the same steps ; fortune, honour, power, affection, all

the possessions of life, and life itself, have been sacrificed by them to justice, virtue, their country, and humanity generally. What they were enabled to do, cannot we perform also? Heavenly Father, Thou that speakest to my heart, compared with thee, what power can the voice of men exercise whose sensuality or egotism treat with mad disdain such a sacrifice? If, indifferent to their moral perfection, they are incapable of sacrificing their pleasures of a day to an eternity of happiness, ought I to show myself the same and try to resemble them?

Jesus, thou perfect model of true greatness, and emblem of the perfection of spirits,—Thou through whom God and nature speak to my soul,—thou who, in Thy terrestrial life, was only one with God and the creation, is not Thy example the sweet light which should illumine and guide my steps? The world of mortals who surrounded Thee, knew not how to recognise in Thee the power by which the Divinity was manifested; they were dazzled and blinded by honours, by power, luxury, and the splendour of vanities; but Thou didst spurn from before Thy feet this glittering dust; Thou chocest for Thy disciples only simple men, and Thou only knewest the eternal relations between Thy Father and Thyself.

And thus, O Jesus, I will become as thyself!

For if it was not intended that I should walk in Thy steps, why was I in my infancy consecrated with the holy water of baptism before Thy altar ? I will study Thy life and Thy doctrine. I will use the most strenuous efforts to ensure the liberty of my soul, in order to become the resemblance of the Divinity. Hard and difficult will be the struggle against my sensual desires, but Thou, O heavenly Father, will grant me the support, perseverance, and courage I require, in order that I may attain that greatness of mind which makes the *true Christian*.—AMEN.







## THE ART OF BEING HAPPY.

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I TIMOTHY, vi. 6.

“ But godliness with contentment is great gain.”

THIS earth is a vast garden of pleasure, strewed with flowers of every variety ; but there are those whose evil practices convert it, for them, into a hell of misery. Slaves to their insatiate voluptuous desires, they ruin the health of their body and soul. Impatient of the future, and a prey to their avaricious hopes and expectations, they allow the present moment to escape, and derive no enjoyment even from the good they possess.

The irrepressible desire for a better condition is, in a great measure, the source of all the passions which torment us. Thence arise the cares which render us insensible to the enjoyments of the present moment ; hence Avarice, debarring itself now to amass for the future ; ruinous and insatiable Sensuality, ever thirsting for still more exquisite pleasure ; Ambition, that enemy to

repose, and which cannot be content with esteem alone; Envy, always miserable at the happiness enjoyed by others; Calumny, the officious sister of Envy;—and, in one word, the whole multitude of vices of every kind. For let a man yield himself the slave of one sin, and he thereby, without desiring or believing it, opens his soul to all others.

Thence arise so many regrets and complaints, and so much lamentation and bitterness. Thence proceed those wailings which represent life as a career of suffering and a scene of sorrow!

The just, the wise, the Christian, trusting in God, and content with what the blessing of God has allotted to him, passes his days in happiness and peace. Not for him is this life a vale of misery, and never does he reproach his God on this account.

Very little is required for the internal happiness of the soul, and the only mode of attaining that has been shown us by Jesus Christ. Why, then, do we refuse to listen to His voice? Why do we not take Him as our guide? Why, carried away by our rash desires and passions, do we struggle against the eternal order of Nature?

Ought the sensual slave, who destroys his health by the immoderate pleasures of the table, by voluptuous enjoyments, or by other excesses, to reproach the world, or his own folly, by which

he is punished? Has he, who has never known how to shield his heart against the troubles and pains of life, and who has allowed external impressions to exercise a great influence and sway over his senses, the right to complain of the severity of his fate, and of the insensibility of mankind? Why does he require that the world should change according to his caprice, instead of conforming himself to the established order of things, regarding men as they are, and not such as his imagination loves to paint them?

If so many evils exist under heaven, to whom are they to be attributed? Are they to be imputed to the Creator, whose wisdom is infinite,—or to man, whose ideas are so limited? When an obstinate child cries with vexation, because it cannot obtain the object of its desires, or shows disdain and contempt for what is granted to it, which is to be condemned—the prudence of the parent, or the folly of the child?

Whatever God has done, is well done. God *gives*, and it is for you to *receive* with wisdom; and when God *refuses*, it is for you to *submit* with patience. What God promises, be it your care to merit; and when God proposes to you an object, learn to employ with wisdom all your strength to accomplish it.

You say, perhaps, that hitherto you have not

been in the enjoyment of a happy destiny ; but review your career of life, examine your past conduct, and seek out the cause of your wrongs. Your fate has not always been such as you may have desired ; but have you yourself been such as you ought to have been ? You have, perhaps, been ill used by men void of feeling ; but when you have suffered through the fulfilment of your duties, have you not experienced some gratification, even amidst all these trials ? You have, perhaps, been deprived of many enjoyments, and of many pleasures which have fallen to the share of others ; but have you, on the other hand, partaken equally of their pains and anxieties ? Your fortune, perhaps, has not increased so rapidly as you may have wished ; but you have acquired at least sufficient to satisfy the necessaries of life, and perhaps have even been enabled to procure some comforts in addition. But why should you make your happiness depend upon a success which does not rely upon yourself ? Why do you confide in the quicksands of human vicissitudes ? False friends, perhaps, may have deceived you ; you have found yourself mistaken and deceived in their sentiments and fidelity. This is truly grievous ; but the error was nevertheless on your side, for you were the dupe of your own delusion. Instead, therefore, of reproaching them and

yourself, why not rather enjoy the flattering and delicious feeling which must proceed from the conviction of never having yourself deceived any of those who have calculated upon and confided in your friendship ?

Man was created to be happy ; and he was designed to be so even upon earth, according to the means he possessed. Such was the will of God, for the infinitely good Creator can have no other design than good.

Man may be happy, but only by his own will. For, endowed as we are with a free and moral will, and created after the image of God, we are not mere blind instruments, beings without a soul, and equally incapable of doing good or evil.

In the will of each individual, therefore, is the principle of his own happiness. He has no true felicity but that which he acquires himself by his own strength and efforts. The happiness which depends upon others is neither real nor lasting ; for what we think they give, they only lend, and can easily take away again. If, instead of being in the power of each individual, happiness depended upon the favour of others, or upon circumstances beyond the calculation of reason, God would not really have created man for happiness.

But what constitutes the basis of all happiness ? What infallible resources does man possess of



peace and tranquillity? O how often have these resources been pointed out to us, but in vain! And yet the secret is contained in two single words: *be content* and *make others content*. Make a fixed resolution to enjoy with the serenity of a pure mind the present moment, and the portion of happiness it presents; and support, with the courage of a firm heart, the privations which your situation imposes upon you.

*Learn to be content* with what is the will of God. This lesson may, perhaps, excite your astonishment; you believe you have never murmured against the decrees of Providence; and you imagine there is nothing more easy than to submit, with a satisfied mind, to the wisdom and goodness of the Creator. But whence proceeds then your disappointment, when circumstances, not attributable to your own conduct, cause your affliction? You say: These circumstances alone are the cause of my discontent: but is not God the cause thereof, and are they not the result of his will? And thus, it is Providence you accuse in your blindness, and it is against God your murmurs are uttered.

Why are you melancholy, when death robs you of cherished beings; when circumstances separate you from your friends; when you feel the thorns of the situation in which you are placed? Whence proceeds that depression, when you lose the

comforts you have been in the habit of enjoying ; when you behold riches suddenly fall into the hands of those who have done nothing to merit them, and rank and distinction bestowed upon men whose claims to such honours are but trifling, whilst you yourself labour conscientiously and in the sweat of your brow, without making any progress or obtaining any reward ? And whom do you reproach and accuse by the complaints which discontent draws from you ? The course of the world, the injustice of fortune, or of accident, as you term it ? But are you ignorant who it is that has marked out the course of chance, and the track of fortune ? Is it not the power of God ? Or, is there a power above the almighty power ?

*Be therefore content* with what is ordained by God. Your murmurs, without changing anything in the natural course of things, are a blasphemy against the Supreme Wisdom, and are a real crime. If the Creator presents to others the elements of a different happiness ; if he offers them other advantages, more beauty, greater riches, better opportunities of being distinguished, and more powerful and influential connections, he has at the same time counterbalanced these privileges by painful drawbacks. It is erroneous to suppose that under purple and silk robes alone, the heart can be elate with joy ; and that tranquillity of mind and

the purest enjoyment can alone be found in the gorgeous palace. There is no light without its shade, nor pleasure without its pain. If you were permitted to change your destiny with a knowledge and consciousness of causes, you would refuse to take the place of him whom now you envy; you would prefer your own lot to his.

Be in one word, therefore, content with God; for with this disposition you will have secured half your happiness. You will enjoy with gratitude and with love, what is apportioned to you on earth. Full of confidence in the wisdom of the Master of the world, you will be able, undisturbed by inquietude and murmuring, to do without what you may not have received. You will bear no envy to any one; and you will smile when you behold the pride with which vain and weak minds make a display of the advantages they fancy they enjoy, and which they imagine you do not possess. You will renounce all those impatient and bold desires, which deprive you of rest, without hastening the progress of time, nor advancing your own future. He who nourishes the most desires in his heart, is the man who experiences in fact the greatest privations, and lives in the greatest poverty. The man, who, on the other hand, is content, is rich and happy, because he has but

few wishes. "Godliness with contentment is great gain."

*Be content with yourself.* By this, however, I do not mean, by any means, that satisfaction of vanity, which is always in admiration of its own work, and proud of its imaginary merit. Be content with yourself, means: Establish and preserve within yourself that moral harmony, which renders sentiments and language accordant with duty. Act in such a way as to preserve your self-esteem, that your conscience may justify you before God, as well as in your own eyes, and in the presence of others. In truth, we can only be content with ourselves as long as we have no reproach to make to ourselves, and as long as we preserve a pure heart, and the consciousness of wise and virtuous conduct.

He who can live thus satisfied with himself, has achieved the completion of his happiness. A profound repose, unalterable serenity, and enduring courage in adversity, are the privilege of the virtuous man. Remember the delightful sensation you experienced whenever you have done a good action, and of which perhaps God alone was the witness. Would you then have wished to exchange that pure pleasure of the soul, and that foretaste of heaven, for those earthly enjoyments which are created by cupidity and egotism? Kings

fall from their thrones ; war and dissension divide and ruin families and states ; calumny and hatred destroy the reputation and honour of high-born and distinguished men ; but what can remove or obscure that celestial serenity which virtue infuses into the heart of man ?

*Be content with other men.* Do not expect in them a perfection they do not possess. Whilst despising their follies, their infirmities, and their vices, assist them, if you can, in correcting them ; but as regards the individuals themselves, help them, instead of hating them for their vices ; for remember that God also bears with them. Be content with men ; take them as they are ; and treat them with indulgence and prudence. If a prudent kindness does not correct them, you will never correct them by your ill-temper and murmurs : on the contrary, you will render the haughty more proud, the obstinate more stubborn, and hypocrites and cheats more artful and more cunning. No man is completely corrupt, nor destitute of every good quality ; but, on the other hand, no man is perfect, nor exempt from all error. Learn to see in every individual only his estimable qualities ; you will thus learn to love him, and his faults will become less offensive and objectionable. If he sees that he obtains your esteem, and that you know how to appreciate him, he will then



return you love for love, and he will make fresh efforts to maintain and strengthen the good qualities you have recognised in him.

Be content with those with whom your connection obliges you to live ; do not require that all should share in your sentiments, that they should conform to your ideas, and that they should possess the same character and the same disposition as yourself. Can such an unjust and inequitable demand accord with the esteem you ought to have for yourself? If certain connections appear unpleasant, endeavour to render them more agreeable by legitimate sacrifices, and by correcting yourself of your own infirmities. It is seldom that resistance is made to disinterestedness united with prudence. Finally, in case all means should prove unavailing, learn to do without such connections ; for the less dependent man is, the less subject to wants, the closer is he to happiness.

Learn to be content with Providence, with yourself, and with all others ; but learn also to make others happy. For how could you enjoy happiness, if you knew a single individual whose welfare you have at all diminished by your own act? Doubtless, it is not in your power to render happy all those by whom you are surrounded ; but at least it does depend upon you not to disturb the repose, peace, and joy, of a good man. He who

can behold without pity those unfortunate beings whom he has it in his power to assist, only prepares for himself equal suffering, and he robs his heart of one of its sweetest satisfactions. The good we sow for others, the pleasure we procure for the companions of our pilgrimage through life, are for ourselves the germs of a happiness which we shall sooner or later enjoy. A good action, however trifling in its nature, always returns to its source, to recompense its author.

Be it then my endeavour to bear privation, to enjoy moderately of the benefits that Thy hand, merciful Father, bestows upon me ; to demand no more than is sufficient to satisfy the necessities of life, and not to allow myself to be led away by rash desires ; and in one word, to be content to make others happy. If then, thou Benefactor of mankind, Thou shouldst bless my works, and reward me with more than I expected of the riches of this world, I will receive them with gratitude from Thy paternal hand. Thou only givest them to me in order that I may advance my own well-being and the happiness of my fellow-creatures.

If until now I have not known all the happiness I might have enjoyed, I ought not to complain of Thee, my heavenly Father, whose kindness fills both heaven and earth, but I ought to reproach

myself for my inconstant desires, my levity, and my passions. Let me strive to become better, that my lot may be improved, and my happiness more complete: content with myself and those around me, I shall be satisfied and happy.—AMEN.





## FEMALE EDUCATION.

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PROVERBS, xxxi. 10, 30, 31.

“ Who can find a virtuous woman ? for her price is far above rubies. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain : but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands ; and let her own works praise her in the gates.”

NEVER, at any former period, has education formed so much a subject of conversation and writing, nay, even of public lectures, as at the present moment. New educational institutions, and the improvement of the existing schools, are among the most prominent topics of discussion ; and this praiseworthy zeal extends its active and beneficial influence not less in the cause of female, than of male education. By an improved system of instruction, and a course of education more rigidly moral, it is hoped to render the rising generation better than those of former times.

The evils observed in the various methods of instruction,—the superfluous matter introduced,—the absurd manner of treating and guiding the

infant mind,—all these objectionable and highly injurious points have exerted to serious meditations wise and enlightened philanthropists. But in this, as in all other cases, the warm enthusiasm for improvement has produced unreasonable results that have been prejudicial to the cause. Some, though talented, have presumed too much on their genius ; and others, for the sake of the vain glory of adding fresh novelties to innovations, have fancied a multitude of insignificant trifles, or have rejected numerous useful and beneficial plans, because they possessed the disadvantage of not being new. Every human enterprise is imperfect at the commencement ; but it is a consolation to know, that in the end the evil cures itself, whilst the good lasts for ever.

The progress of nations in experience, knowledge, and science generally, has been followed, as an inevitable consequence, by improvement in public education. The period of childhood should not be too limited for the acquirement of so much useful information, and for the development of talents henceforth indispensable in civilised life ; and, on the other hand, it is important to treat the juvenile pupil with care and tenderness at that happy age, intended for the growth and increase of corporeal strength, that it may not be overburthened with study, or embittered by severe application.



But the vigorous activity, the variety of mental and physical powers, and the store of diversified knowledge, which at the present day are required of man in every station of life, are not expected in woman. It is true, that now more is claimed from a man than in former times, because of the greater extension and diffusion of the arts and sciences, trade and commerce, and, in fact, of the means of living generally. Woman, however, remains in the same position in her relations to society and the world as in early times. The eternal laws of nature have assigned a limited sphere to her activity. As soon as she goes beyond it, she abandons her natural dignity ; she usurps a position in the career allotted to man.

Nevertheless, it has been considered not less a duty to improve the education of females, and complete their instruction ; a praiseworthy object, without doubt, as long as the vocation assigned by nature to woman is not lost sight of:—the loving wife, the cheerful and soothing companion in life, the careful mother, and the first instructress of infancy, being the titles of the offices which properly and naturally fall to the charge and care of woman.

But the idea itself of a public institution for young females, implies a contradiction to the essential objects of their education. The sphere

of action for man is the world, amidst the busy din and tumult of society, and its various grades and stations. The scene for the display of the powers and qualities of the future woman is the *domestic hearth and family circle*;—such ought to be the school for the young girl.

The domestic scenes of life, however, are very different from those exhibited in public institutions. The first exhibit continually the union ordained by God of old and young, of the two sexes, with diversity of opinions and character: it is there that the young girl learns what constitute the advantages and defects in the economy of life; she learns to submit to her superiors in age and experience, to guide the conduct of her juniors, to be the friend of her associates, and exercise authority over her subordinates. Thus the young female finds her proper school in the family circle of her home,—brothers, sisters, and companions.

But far different is it in public institutions. Here are to be found, not parents to whom the heart addresses itself with confidence, but masters and mistresses, before whom the soul, with fear and trembling, disguises its true feelings, and retreats behind a formal delicacy, which is often made the principal aim of female education. All those numerous incidents of daily occurrence, so

instructive in the paternal home,—those details, those little nothings which charm and captivate the heart,—are all here wanting, and are substituted by a cold monotony of lessons and observances; the best instructors almost always remain as strangers in the eyes of the pupil, and the associates are not as the companions of home. Neither the father nor the mother, who are regarded with innate veneration, nor the younger branches of the family, who have such strong claims on the affections, are to be found there. The young girl, away from her home, finds herself subjected to the authority of governesses, whom she regards, and accustoms herself to consider, with perhaps increasing prejudice; and she meets with numerous companions, variously endowed with talents, and in whose society she becomes now a heedless, now a reserved companion, ignorant of the pleasures or the pains which lend their charm to, or which lose their bitterness under, the paternal roof.

Thus, during the most decisive years of her education, the young girl receives a training rarely necessary, and often prejudicial to her future course of life. She returns to the sanctuary of her home, with a modicum of instruction, a tendency to disguise and conceal her feelings, a proficiency in the art of formality and ceremony,

and with a taste and gift for shining in society by little trifling nothings. Happy is she if, in the later scenes of her childhood, she retains that joyfulness and natural innocence, which characterised her earlier days ; the paternal roof must be again her school. But very often, alas ! it is too late, and she is for ever lost to the labours, every-day cares, pleasures, and little enjoyments of domestic life. She becomes a wife without having learnt the means to make herself the cheerful companion of life ; she becomes the mistress of a house, without having acquired the method of attending to the important or minor points necessary for its management ; she becomes eventually a mother, without feeling the slightest love for the fatigues and cares of the maternal state.

We are in possession of a multitude of precepts upon the education of females ; but the most wise and fruitful principle of all others, is true and sincere piety. What now constitutes the perfection of woman, is the same as was thousands of years since : we trace it in her portrait drawn by Solomon in his Proverbs—" Her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness." The wise king paints in seducing colours the love of neatness in the pious woman,

her habits of industry, and the serenity of her soul :  
“Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain ; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.”  
Piety is the crown of all the virtues and perfections of woman.

These virtues and perfections are the most distinguished charms in the wife, whether of the labourer or of the monarch ; but both the one and the other ought, in addition, to adorn her mind with the knowledge indispensable to her condition and rank in society. This knowledge may easily be obtained, for women of high birth have been known to earn their living by the labour of their hands in a humble condition ; and those of low degree having risen to the highest ranks,—have stood with proud dignity in the presence of kings.

The nature and accomplishments of woman form a beautiful contrast with those of man. *He* is born to action and influence in the bustle and turmoil of the world ; *she*, to regulate and superintend the peaceful duties of domestic life. *He*, intrepid, capable of resistance, and bold in danger, subdues rebellion, and reigns through unconquerable might ; *she*, on the contrary, rules by mildness and grace. *He*, calculating and acute, capable of every kind of labour and social relationship, lives almost entirely a life of active study and reflection ; *she*, priestess of Nature, fulfils its duties and its objects, and finds



in all that promotes and preserves her natural dignity, her first and most distinguished charm.

As the external world stands in contrast with the internal world, art with nature, strength with grace, so is man, in an earthly sense, placed in natural contrast with woman. But in a religious point of view, on the contrary, their souls have not the same distinction; religion crowns, or ought to crown, for ever their united existence. Thus, too, the vocation of the woman determines the extent and limits of the circle which embraces the sphere of her education.

Grace is far more precious than beauty. Beauty, like the flower, participating in the nature of all earthly things, fades away after the lapse of a few years; but grace is an attraction and charm of the soul, and embellishes even old age itself. The splendour of a blooming countenance, the noble regularity of the features,—in one word, all that may delight or impose upon the senses,—does not always please the heart. It often happens, that in beautiful women there is wanting that charm of grace which captivates and enchains the soul by sweet mildness, by delicate and tender attention, and by a dignity without pretension. Beauty inspires an admiration more immediate than lasting; but grace renders even external deformities amiable, and establishes its empire gradually but securely.

The desire to please, and by that means to exercise a certain power, is in the nature of the female sex. But, too frequently, in their education, grace is confounded with outward gentility and politeness, with a studied form in the gait and movements, and with the style and manner of address, usually denominated fashionable. But this is truly nothing more than an imitation of the charm of nature; it is the paint applied to besmear the pale and faded cheek; but real grace is health and nature itself, which gives to the complexion its incarnate hue. Beauty is an outward attraction, which strikes and dazzles the eye; but grace is an intellectual charm, which shines softly through the corporeal envelope, and ennobles it.

The inventions of taste in fashion and dress, and the little agreeable artifices of social life, may be learnt and copied; but their fate is that of all imitations. They are only appreciated for a moment, as everything else which is more or less distant from the truth. The same as the strength of body, energy of character, and opinions of the man, are expressed in his features, in his words, in the sound of his voice, in his gait, and in his movements, without his own observation; so also the innocence, the mildness, and the benevolence of soul in the woman, become revealed without design or art. It is not the taste of fashion which

gives the grace ; but the grace of the soul, manifested in the most trivial affairs, is what fixes the laws of good taste. It is not every dress that suits or becomes every female ; the dress most analogous with the character of each is that which is the best adapted. The more noble that character, the more dignity will be naturally shown externally. Therefore, nothing can be more displeasing than those half-naked figures, imagined by wanton coquetry and fashion, the indication of a want of decency and delicacy. There is more grace in purity and simplicity of dress than in the most splendid attire ; the first are the symbols of the virtue of woman, the latter the emblem of her vanity.

The education of females is generally either neglected or perverted ; the proof of which is in the greater importance attached to the art of pleasing externally, than in the development of the amiable qualities of the soul. Young females attire themselves with elegance on occasions when they are certain of attracting observation ; but the strict order and regularity of their toilet is only the effect of artifice, with which the heart can claim no merit. In their internal domestic arrangements, they exercise neither order nor exactitude ; they know not how to unite good taste with neatness and cleanliness. They learn dancing, music, and foreign languages, in order to perform a conspicuous

part in the world of fashion, and to receive its applause ; but in the bosom of their domestic circle at home, they are ignorant of the art of maintaining or re-establishing peace and concord by acting the character of the modest and gentle peace-maker ; by showing a filial submission towards their parents, indulgence for the errors and faults of others, and encouragement for good behaviour. They read extensively, give their opinions and judgment upon works of art, visit the theatres, talk of science, maintain a conversation with spirit and animation, and make epigrams ; but to know how to console and sympathise at home with those that may be afflicted, to replace what may be wanting, to be content with little, to do all for others and require little themselves, to vary the uniformity of an idle or vain life by the active resources of the soul—of this art they are ignorant, and yet it is the art in which they ought to excel most ; for in erudition, in science, in criticism, in all that trespasses upon the domain of man, they run the risk of being surpassed. And, in fact, generally speaking, the more the woman forgets the limits of the sphere marked out for her, in order to shine in the career reserved for the force and vigour of man, the more must she lose of her natural grace, and become physically and morally displeasing.

The scene of action, and the sphere most naturally and suitably adapted for woman, is domestic life ; her place is not amidst the excitement and agitation of public life. In all climates, and in all ages, the throne of female virtue has ever been established under the roof of her family. Only in cities, where, discarding nature, the order she has fixed is completely overturned and banished, where the man is vain and affects to be effeminate, and where night is converted into day ; only amidst this perversion of customs and habits, we are not so much shocked or disgusted at seeing the woman aping the man, and making herself more the ornament of the ball-room than the charm of the domestic hearth. There only it is, that the young female can earn a reputation by her conquests, by her romantic intrigues, by her acquaintance with novels and romances ; whilst she ruins her parents by her extravagant expenditure, and repays their blind indulgence and forbearance with obstinate and shameless opposition. There only it is, that mothers receive praise for devoting their valuable time to balls and routs instead of to their children, and preferring the society of strangers abroad to the domestic comforts of their home. There, also, may frequently be met many of the female sex, whose age unfits them for the indulgence of their former follies, and who close



their career as peevish devotees or scandalising mischief-makers.

It is only under his domestic roof, and nowhere else, that man can find true relaxation, ease, and comfort. There, coming from the struggles and contentions of public life, he sees again all that he holds dear in the members of his family circle. The easy state of life which fortune has procured him the means of enjoying, becomes doubly grateful amidst those that share it with him; and the reputation and glory he may have acquired, receive still greater dignity and honour when enjoyed in their society.

The whole and sole object of man's life is to procure the means to maintain his family; but in the bosom of that family, it is the wife who is to second his efforts by her management and direction. When he returns to his home to repose from the labours and exertions of the day abroad, she is all soul and activity, on her part, to render that home comfortable and happy; and even when he is away, busy in the world of bustle and excitement, she contemplates him at a distance, in her moments of quiet leisure. Home is the centre of all a man's cares and hopes—the object of all his speculations, all his adventures, and all his perilous voyages. But upon woman it devolves to glorify the sanctuary to which the man consecrates all his

faculties and powers. By her economy she preserves the riches he has amassed, and selects therefrom wherewith to recompense the husband for all his anxiety. Surrounded by insincerity, deception, and hatred in the world, the man is often forced by circumstances to disguise and conceal his sentiments, and act the opposite of what he feels and is; but by the love and the sincere and generous affection of his wife, he is recalled again to himself; he returns again to his proper and native sphere.

The simplicity of nature is the most brilliant ornament of woman; this merit comprehends her wisdom, full of grace, and her delicate sense in all her domestic relations of life. All that is forced, displeases; it is nothing else than artifice, and betrays the deformity it attempts to conceal. As the infant charms by its innocence and truth, so the virgin, the wife, and the matron, charm by their simplicity, mildness, serenity, and cheerful disposition. Their outward form may wear the appearance of age, but their heart retains its freshness of youth. Nature teaches them to love, and it instructs them in their avocations and duties. Faithful pupils of Nature, she remains their instructress to their latest days. Everything contrary to their destination is discarded by her as contrary to the first of all laws. Unhappily, the

chief error in the education of females, is that they are instructed, more than boys, at the expense of all sincerity, and are taught the art of dissimulation and false appearance: in the place of unpretending simplicity and dignity of innocence, is substituted *studied and affected imitation of the natural*.

Therefore, parents, if you wish to give to your daughter an education which shall render her amiable, do not confide her into hands both strange and mercenary; keep her safely guarded, next to your own heart; let her know less, in order that she may become more what she ought to be. Her juvenile serenity and cheerfulness, her innocence profaned by no impure thought, the natural truth of her sentiments, the delicacy of her soul which can only find delight in noble feelings, her innate maidenly dignity from the consciousness of her virtue,—these are qualities worthy of your care; preserve them from the contagion of corrupt manners, and the seduction of bad examples; and thus you will render your daughter an angel upon earth, and you will behold her cultivate the flowers of domestic felicity with affectionate devotion and at every sacrifice. Any other is only an artificial education, which ornaments the outward form, but cannot penetrate to the depths of the soul.

Above all, if you desire to found the education of your daughter upon a firm and solid base, the unerring means is through the religion of Jesus Christ. For without religion there is no truth, no love, no virtue, but, unhappily, too much dissipation, deception, and hidden passion. Without religion, there can be no beauty of soul, no domestic peace, no consolation in affliction, no courage in critical moments, but, alas! too much affectation, imperious passion, coquetry, and levity, ending in despondency.

The sight of either a youth or virgin kneeling in prayer, is more touching still and more sublime than to behold even the aged and venerable prostrate in prayer; it presents the image of innocence in communion with the Being of Infinite Holiness, the Lord God Almighty.

“Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised,” saith the wise man.—AMEN.





## DECREASE OF DOMESTIC PROSPERITY.

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PHILIPPIANS, iv. 12.

“ I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound : everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.”

It is by no means an unusual occurrence in our days, to behold the most opulent families suddenly and unexpectedly visited with the reverses of fortune, and fall into a state of decay and even ruin. How many wealthy establishments have been forced to retrench their expenditure, and how many persons, hitherto in the enjoyment of easy circumstances, have found themselves reduced and thrown into a state approaching to poverty and indigence.

And, in truth, it is a cruel sight, to behold the father of a virtuous family, plunged into necessity and distress, after having previously always continued to experience the enjoyment of ease and the comfort of life. It is, indeed, painful thus to lose in a few days, or even at a moment, the fruits



of an active and industrious life, and to see disappear irrecoverably, the gains resulting from much toil, great care, and perhaps inquietude and anxiety. But, what must prove still more painful, is to suffer such a reverse of fortune in an advanced age, when we no longer retain the vigour of mind nor the spirit of enterprise, and when the laborious exertions and active energies of our youth, are succeeded and repaid by sunken and impoverished age. And, finally, what must complete this wretched picture of distress, is to see vanish from before our view, with our fortune, all the plans we had formed—resulting from tender and paternal affection—for the benefit of our children, those objects of our continual care and anxiety.

From the first moment it becomes known that a family has experienced a reverse of fortune, the whole world around them becomes changed, and assumes a different aspect. The greater portion of mankind, as is usual, exhibit forthwith an altered tone and manner towards the sufferers. A few amongst them, it is true, possessed of more generous and noble hearts, still faithful to their principles, come forward and seek to soften with their sympathy and condolence, the affliction of the suffering family; and prove that they do not measure their esteem with riches. Then it is, although, alas! but too rarely, that the grateful

friend advances, and bearing in mind the debt he owes of earlier, happier times, hastens to repay the obligation at this trying moment, whilst, also, from another quarter, appears the former lowly, but hitherto neglected member of the circle, who now, however, forgetting the past mortification, seeks to show himself at heart, the true and sincere friend. But, on the other hand, hundreds of former friends, *in name only*, turn their backs upon the family, and those, upon whom they most calculated, forsake them. Those to whom the most disinterested conduct had been shown, return the kindness with scorn, and aggravate the misfortunes of their friends with hard-hearted selfishness. Others again, formerly envious, now show their satisfaction, and secretly or undisguisedly, rejoice at the changed state of the condition of their friends, as if in triumph ; and, if they feel any sorrow whatever, it is only that the blow is not more heavy, whilst they discharge their venom in scandalising and spiteful language.

It is not every one that is strong enough to bear such affliction with Christian patience ; many have been known to abandon themselves completely to despair, whilst others, poisoning the rest of their days with vain regret and sorrow, undermine their health, and shorten their existence, to the injury and loss of their relations and most intimate friends.

But what can human wisdom dictate to him,

who, surrounded by the ruins of his fortune, must despair ever to possess the means of rebuilding the edifice? How recover the usual serenity of mind, when the fruits of an entire life of activity are lost? How can we restore to the domestic hearth, either happiness or peace, when we see our children without resources, and see nothing else around us in every direction, but destruction and misery? Alas! in such a situation, it is difficult, nay, it is impossible, to regain the lost tranquillity. The wisdom of the prudent man is but a feeble consolation in the bosom of poverty and scorn; and the best principles lose all their influence, when we behold ourselves thrown, from our calm and tranquil state, into the overwhelming tempest, from the paradise of our domestic happiness, into the depth of wretchedness and misery.

How! Does then, really, no consolation exist—is no refuge to be found? May we no longer hope for peaceful and happy days? Ah, yes! and you, hapless being, are in error; whilst, at the same time, your language shows you have never known wisdom. You boasted of your religion, but hitherto you have not ever been religious; thence it was that misfortune came upon you, and taught you to feel that there existed something still more elevated, more exalted, than mere fortune and rank. Until that

moment, you were not a Christian ; for if Christianity had penetrated your soul, you would now say, as Paul said formerly to the Philippians : “ I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound : everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.”

If you still continue without ceasing to lament the loss of your fortune, mean-spirited and pusillanimous man as you are, you never have been a Christian, although you may have been observed at your devotions in church, and your language always respectful towards God. You never were a Christian, although you might have appeared so to yourself, because you attached too high a value to those merely external advantages, upon which you placed the sole foundation of the contentment of the mind and the peace of the soul. Whoever is not capable of supporting great losses, by preserving his serenity and strength of soul, he has not yet understood the spirit of Jesus Christ. It is only right that he should be made to bear the severest trials, in order that he may, eventually, estimate all perishable things according to their true value.

There are many who have experienced more reverses than yourself, but who have always shown themselves more strong, more courageous, and

more resigned to the will of God. Even emperors themselves, when expelled from their thrones, have signalised their fall by the elevation of their sentiments. Men of power and of high rank, driven and forced from their palaces and seats of dignity, have been reduced to seek an asylum far distant from their native country, and to renounce for ever the pleasures and enjoyments to which their birth and position appeared to secure them a permanent and exclusive right. Yet they have been seen to support with courage a fate *they could not change*. They have learnt to know the Almighty hand which rules events, precipitates the great into the dust, and elevates the humble and lowly into the sphere they appeared not born to enter.

Gather together, therefore, your strength and courage. Accustom yourself, above all things, to look misfortune in the face, whether it menaces you from afar, or threatens you more immediately at home.

*Commence by ascertaining the exact state of your fortune in all its divisions, and learn exactly what remains over after the losses you have sustained, and after you have satisfied your various obligations.* Many have fallen from one misfortune into another, because they have always wanted the courage to make themselves acquainted, *in the proper time*, with the exact situation of their affairs,



and always thus remaining in doubt and uncertainty as to their real condition, have deceived themselves and others with false hopes. This uncertainty has only prolonged their anxiety, instead of diminishing it; and thus their heart has nearly lost all the serenity and quietude they were forced to assume in their appearance. To complete their misery, they had not even at their command, the consoling remedy of seeking pity or imploring aid from their friends. The means they had recourse to, in order to save themselves, only aggravated their embarrassment; and far from preserving themselves, they only dragged other innocent and honest families to the brink, and even into the very depths, of the abyss they had gradually prepared for their own destruction.

*Exercise economy in your household; do not hesitate, with this view, to dive into all the disadvantages and evils of your situation.* Make yourself acquainted with the whole extent of your misfortune, if you wisely wish to prevent greater evil. And if, in regulating your accounts, you find you cannot secure yourself longer, preserve at least the purity of your conscience and the honour of your name. You will thus save from shipwreck, and for ever, the peace of your soul, your true happiness. You will be enabled to bear without uneasiness the scrutinising eye of the world; for real misfortune

is no crime, nor is consequent poverty a shame. You will retain the esteem of your contemporaries, and you may venture to calculate upon the approbation of God. And more than this ; even if you should be deprived of all, the blessing of God will still rest upon you, and will sooner or later relieve you, and re-possess your children of the comforts of which, for a time, they may have been deprived.

*Delay not a moment to regulate your expenses according to your real situation, and the state of your affairs.* Renounce all vanity and false pride ; sincerity and humility have never plunged mankind into misfortune, but self-love and unfaithfulness have often led to the brink of the abyss. Banish from yourself all austerity and bad faith ; and you will thus be enabled to support the changes of fortune with that magnanimity of soul which smoothes away all the crosses and vicissitudes of life. In a shipwreck, the first that generally perishes is he who most abandons himself to despair. The courageous and brave man retains his presence of mind, and seizes the plank which is to convey him across the boisterous waves to the harbour of refuge and safety. He who places his confidence in God and Providence will be surely saved.

*Fail not to take the wise and firm resolution to limit your expenditure, and to regulate your outlay according to the actual state of your income.* Banish

false shame ; for that which affects and pains you is not the more simple style of living which your situation now imposes upon you, but the fear of avowing, by your economy, the real state of your affairs. Exercise, however, the courage to be just towards yourself and your family, and to be truly honest and sincere. It is no shame, in times like our own, to debar ourselves from participating in the enjoyment of many things, which we might otherwise share in. Economy, far from being a disgrace, inspires confidence and esteem, for by that we repair the diminished state of our fortune ; our ancestors amassed their property by combining labour with temperance ; their incomes increased because their expenses were moderate and limited. But the contrary results must be experienced by the thoughtless and extravagant spendthrift, whose inconsiderate and reckless vanity, sooner or later, brings down upon him the rebukes of his family, and the indignation of his contemporaries ; to which are added the reproaches of his own conscience. Such is and must be the just punishment of him who obstinately persists in pursuing expensive habits, whether at home or abroad.

*Preserve the purity of your conscience, and keep your honour without blemish, even at the sacrifice of everything else. Having done this, you will have*

saved the better part of yourself: you will have lost nothing of your own true worth and dignity.

Oh what a treasure to possess, is that of a good conscience—strong in itself and secure from all reproach and fear! To this we owe the elevation of our soul in humiliation and abasement, calm resignation in misfortune, fortitude under persecution, and confidence in God in the most difficult circumstances of life. But the perfidious deceiver and designing and malicious counsellor, dare he lift up his eyes towards the great Mover of all things, the Supreme Judge of all actions, who suffers no crime to pass unpunished, nor no virtue without its reward?

Innocence secures respect, even amidst misfortune; it produces the blush of shame in the foul-tongued slanderer, and strikes the venomous defamer dumb with silence. It conciliates for you the esteem of many of those to whom you were before not known, or even those who knew you not rightly in your prosperity. Without any other appeal than that of your own innocence and firmness, they will take a pride in offering you the hand of succour; for, let it never be forgotten, that we may hate a tyrant, we may conspire to overthrow a powerful and despotic oppressor, we may despise the rich fool, and only feel indifference for all that may be beautiful; but the just man

forces even his enemies to respect him ; and innocence appeases and disarms the most wrathful and angry spirit. The triumph of virtue is certain and secure, even if it be obtained only over the grave of the unfortunate.

It is a thing of usual occurrence in our days, to behold, here and there, in every quarter, amongst our fellow-creatures, the decline and diminution of their worldly prosperity. But nothing is more rare than to meet with Christians sufficiently firm not to feel dejected by their reverses, and equally wise and prudent to avoid dragging others into their misfortune and ruin. Nor is it less rare to find Christians, when misfortune has deprived them of all it was not in their power to prevent, sufficiently resigned to turn their thoughts from transient possessions, and to fix them with confidence upon imperishable gifts ; nor sufficiently courageous to walk in the steps of Jesus, their divine chief and guide, and renounce, as He did, the things of this world ; to bear, like Him, shame and outrage ; nor sufficiently detached from worldly objects to be able to say, with Saint Paul : “ I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound : everywhere and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need ; I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.—AMEN.”





## THE RELIGIOUS WARS.

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ROMANS VIII. 35.

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”

WHEN the nations became divided upon the subject of their religious creed; and all hope for the re-establishment of the unity of the church had vanished, the ruling powers took advantage of this irritation of mind, and turned it to objects completely foreign to matters of faith. The one party, in its political wisdom, became alarmed lest it might lose a portion of its authority; and the other began to hope that the favourable moment had now arrived in which it might extend its power. Some rejoiced at witnessing the kingdoms of others a prey to disorder and agitation; and others again favoured what those persecuted. The disputes between the Protestant princes were observed with malignant joy and delight by those

that still adhered to the Catholic persuasion, who hoped to overpower them by this very disunion that prevailed among them. The former again enriched themselves with the spoils of the convents in the territories they entered. The right of the temporal authorities to pervert the property of the clergy from the use originally intended, was a point of constant discussion; and imperial edicts were continually issued, commanding the restoration of these possessions to the priesthood. The princes, however, on the contrary, who found their advantage in the suppression of the convents, maintained that the monastic institutions had long since renounced the object for which they were founded; that, instead of being schools of virtue and wisdom, they were converted into habitations of hypocrisy and sloth, nourished by the marrow of the people; that the celibacy of the monks, priests, and nuns, at first the result of a fanatic exaltation of sanctity, had become afterwards a confirmed law by the policy of the court of Rome; that it ever remained an institution completely opposed to the laws of nature and divine regulation, and was the source of much evil and corruption.

This and other similar subjects became the constant theme for dispute; and thus the rival parties, often making an appeal to the sword,

fought with varied success, until at length the general contention produced a general war. The people of all ranks rose up against each other to pillage, murder, and destroy. One of those periods had again arrived which made the earth a scene of inexpressible misery ; a period which, according to the prediction of Jesus Christ, would arrive during the life-time of his disciples, when they should hear talk of wars and revolutions, and nation should be seen to advance against nation, kingdom against kingdom ; when there should be plague, famine, and earthquakes, and terrible signs ; and when hatred and persecution should arise for the name of Jesus Christ.

And, truly, in the name of Jesus it was that all parties now opposed each other with the sword ; it was for the glory of God that men now bestrewed the field of battle with their blood ; it was for the attainment of divine salvation that towns and villages were set on fire, and palaces and lowly cottages pillaged ; that aged and venerable men, women, and children, were cruelly and dreadfully misused and ill-treated ; it was the Father of mercy, the Father of the creation, that all parties invoked, and whose assistance all besought to exterminate their opponents.

Alas, to what a fearful extent does not the wild and furious passion of man carry him ! A war of

thirty years desolated Germany; and even at the present day the effects are felt of the inhuman atrocities committed during that fearful period. Brothers plunging the sword into the heart of brothers; sons betraying their own fathers; and parents giving up their sons to the executioner. All human affections appeared completely extinguished; all the ties of nature for ever torn asunder. The continuation of this vast scene of desolation and misery appeared endless; men were born, grew up, and died, without having witnessed during their lives one single year of peace, and without having seen aught but one continued series of bloodshed and devastation—the dreadful results of religious war!

In all wars there is manifested the most shameful degeneration of the human species, surpassing in malice, cruelty, and sanguinary desire, even the beasts of the forest and the desert. But of all wars, the most terrible and obstinate are civil and religious wars; for each combatant, animated by individual enthusiasm and frenzy, is defender of his own cause; he does not fight for land or for title, nor even for the pay of his prince, but for his own account and opinion; he is his own champion in the cause of that individual hatred which rages within him.

When misery had everywhere attained its

height; when all the countries around had in succession become destroyed by fire and sword, pestilence and famine; and when all strength had become exhausted, peace was at length determined upon. The first burst of kindled fury and rage had been appeased and silenced, and the cravings of revenge allayed. The greater portion of those who had taken a principal part in these dreadful scenes were now no more; but others had succeeded, who continued hostilities with views completely different from those of their predecessors. The object of the war had now, at its termination, become altogether changed, and the question now no longer turned upon the extermination of the one or the other religious party, or the establishment of one exclusively reigning church; but the points now to be settled were those of indemnity, territory, and limits, with acknowledgment of title and rank. Catholics and Reformers of all sects had struggled and fought with one another for their existence and rights; all had now become consolidated, and more firmly established and held together in peace and unity.

Such were the results of these dreadful struggles. The hopes and wishes, however, so reciprocally hostile between these parties, remained unfulfilled. The will of God was accomplished, but not that of man; and thus it was that a numerous body of



churches, and religious creeds, were enabled to continue side by side. How easy might it not have been to the Almighty, the Disposer of all things, to have given the victory to one or the other party! But this diversity of faith and worship contributed to establish a diversity of thought and feeling, and thus to excite and stimulate the churches to emulate each other to proceed onwards in the path of improvement. A pacific but continual struggle of all the powers leads to perfection, and in time destroys whatever is imperfect and unworthy. The world had long since learned, that the stagnation of the intellectual faculties by the despotic sway of an exclusive church, might eventuate in the ruin of the whole community. Stagnant pools send forth infectious fever and putrid disease, while running waters are the fountain of health.

These protracted and cruel religious wars, which had for their object the triumph of one particular faith over another, by no means prevented the continuance of a schism in the Christian church. What benefit had therefore been produced by the shedding of so much blood? Of what service had been the devastation spread around, and the calamities and misery suffered by so many nations?

Truly, the evils accompanying such wars, espe-

cially when not considered merely in a general point of view, but beheld in all their details, in the piercing shrieks of the mother, the cries of the wounded, the moans of the dying, the wild despair of the plundered, and the terror of the vanquished, together with, lastly, the languishing state of the starving,—truly it may be said, that a scene of such misery exposes the observer to the most dreadful of all temptations, to that of renouncing all faith in the love and justice of an all-ruling Providence. For at the view of these dreadful consequences of frenzy and fury, and when contemplating the scene of the frightful and undeserved misery, which overwhelms the innocent, we ask, Whence and to what end does all this take place? And if our reason, which searches in vain for this end, seeks satisfaction in the probability that what is endured by individuals is only a just punishment for sins with which we are unacquainted, why then, we ask, should those that are acknowledged to be quite innocent, be dragged into the torrent of calamity and tribulation? What has the poor, harmless infant committed, that a wild and remorseless soldier should in his fury dash it against a wall or cast it into the flames? Why are so many links of affection burst asunder, and so much happiness barbarously destroyed? Why has God united us by ties closely

and delicately interwoven, if he permits them to be torn asunder amidst sorrow and pain? Why has he given us an irresistible desire to construct for ourselves a fabric of happiness, if an accident of nature or the wickedness of man is permitted to demolish, at one blow, all that the labour and anxiety, the hopes and joys of our life, have produced? Can we therein trace and recognise a plan of divine wisdom, or the love of Providence in a tender care for human beings?—and while, too, so many sacrifices have been made towards the elevation of the tender mind in Christian morality, but who, nevertheless, fall the victims of misfortune; although, as says the Scripture, not a sparrow shall fall without the knowledge of Him who has counted all the hairs upon our head?

My soul shudders and trembles within me! How many desponding hearts have experienced what I myself have felt in the most painful hours of my life, and, like me, have asked of Heaven—why must I suffer so, and what good can result therefrom? How few there are possessed of that heroic confidence to be enabled to say with St. Paul, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”

I have often met with persons unable to reconcile in their mind, the melancholy fate they had

experienced, either through war or other circumstances, with the idea they had formed of the providence and love of God : I have beheld them for a long time continue inconsolable and murmuring in a state of complete despair, until at length they have suddenly stopped, as if they were unexpectedly illumined by some trait of light. I have then found that, all at once, they had recognised the utility of their own sufferings, or public calamity ; and that, amidst their affliction, they had heard a voice which said : “ Be still, and know that I am God.” (Psalm xlv. 10.)

One thing is certain, when I am forced to witness so much unmerited misery, and more especially those evils produced by war, I feel consoled when I recollect, namely, *that physical pain and earthly evils altogether, have not always a mere temporal benefit in view, but have for their object that which is far more exalted.*

Proverbially we know, that *experience is the mother of prudence.* The ordinary evils of life, whether they are the result of faults committed or not, although they may not appear to have an object, never fail to operate beneficially upon the mind. They make us more cautious and more considerate, and force us to acquire knowledge and to develop talents, by the aid of which we may prevent our suffering again from similar mis-

fortunes. Experience engenders prudence ; but this wisdom, although a quality of the mind, is only applicable to the relations of terrestrial life, and to their just and proper knowledge and appreciation. Prudence is not by any means one of the principal virtues of the soul ; nor is the final object of all our sufferings on earth merely to make us more wise. What can eventually all human wisdom oppose to the imperious power of destiny ? The afflictions of this life have not for their object the advantages of this life, but the happiness of our immortal soul.

Proverbially we know also, that *misfortune improves mankind*. Moral perfection is a supreme good—we ought to aim at becoming perfect as our celestial Father himself is perfect. Afflictions are the true means of ensuring to our soul prerogatives as indestructible as itself. But how can man improve himself by the influence of earthly afflictions and physical sufferings ? How can things visible beyond us, so haply influence that which is unseen within us ? They operate by making us convinced, by sad experience, of their uncertainty and decay, and prevent us, by the inconstancy of their joys, from placing confidence in them. He who considered a large fortune as the first of possessions, and has lost his own by the wickedness of man, or by war, fire, or



inundation, begins to learn that money and all other property, do not offer that solid and enduring support which he feels to be necessary to him. Equally so is the case with him who, having fallen from the pinnacle of rank and consideration, finds himself an object of contempt and shame, and becomes then convinced that his heart has bowed to a false divinity, and feels pity for the man who places his dependence for happiness upon the honours which man can give and take away from him. And, lastly, he who has lost his best friends and his most dearly beloved relatives, is doubly reminded of his own mortality, and that he must never allow his heart to be attached by too strong an affection, whether it be to his father, mother, his own children, sister, brother, or most intimate friends—for nothing earthly can endure.

The world will not afford us any durable enjoyment. We must depend upon ourselves, and upon the spirit which reigns within us; we must detach ourselves as much as possible from all that is sensual, and become indifferent to all that may flatter our passions. Finding nothing in the order of things upon earth that we can place our confidence in, because all must fall, all must come to an end, we are thus ejected even by the passing world itself, and are invited to give our heart to things divine and imperishable, which alone constitute

our real possessions. The more we refuse to understand the order and arrangement established by God in the universe, the more we have to suffer. Approach, approach the heavenly Father, by the sanctification of the soul, is sounded in our ears by every unhappy event of our lives.

Necessity leads us whither we ought to go—to God. In order to be happy, we must exchange the love of the world for the love of heaven. This is the one grand object of all the afflictions and trials of life—they are intended to make us the imitators of God.

No, there is no real misery in those evils over which I may triumph by the force of mind, by perseverance, confidence in God, resolution, and virtue. Misfortune, therefore, may be traced to the weakness of man, who is too prone to pleasure, and abandons himself to enjoyments with passion and immoderation. He who can conquer himself, has conquered in his own heart the world and all its miseries. Far from being separated, therefore, from the love of God by affliction, anguish, persecution, or famine, they only reawaken in us the love of God and divine things. The calamitous years of the religious wars, as all the atrocities of subsequent periods, make me shudder, it is true, at human depravity; but they can neither shake nor weaken my faith in the providence and love of God.

But, it may be asked, are the innocent victims of the brutality which, alas! the soldiery have too often exhibited, really more to be pitied, than if they had sunk under the sufferings of a lingering disease? And those fire-consumed dwellings, whether cottages or palaces, would they not in time have crumbled into ruin as complete, even though never assailed by war? He whose soul is not in such close union with his God, that he can, by strength so derived, bear up against the loss of *all* earthly joys, stands in need of suffering and sorrow, to teach him to detach himself from the world and its evanescent good, that he may rise to God, and lift himself above the circumstances of this life, in imitation of his Saviour, who voluntarily took upon Himself the severest pains, the deepest woe, for the good of the world, for the salvation of souls whose earthly and evil passions had otherwise plunged them into irretrievable destruction!—  
AMEN.





## SOCIAL LIFE.

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1 PETER iv. 8—10.

“And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves; for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man has received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

WE are born to cherish and act up to the principle of sociability. The Creator has planted in the heart of every human creature the natural impulse and inclination to seek his fellow-creature, in order to share and participate with him in the joys and sorrows of his earthly existence. Even the most savage and ferocious beasts of the forest and the desert recognise its gentle power and influence. And who could or would wish to withstand this inclination? Who would desire to inhabit a world where our days should be wasted in one perpetual solitude, where we could neither labour for our fellow-creature, nor offer him friendship for friendship; where in our occupations, more or less important, we should never receive the smile of

approbation and encouragement, and where no loving soul would ever listen to our complaints with tender and sympathising pity? Alas! if such were, indeed, the case, it would be no world, no veritable scene of life, but one vast and gloomy grave, in which we should drag along our solitary and miserable existence. The unfortunate inhabitants of a prison feel the loss of social intercourse the most painful of all deprivations; and when the cold dungeons and silent walls around them remain insensible to their sighs and groans, they catch even at the spider, as a last resource, and, taming it to their purpose, they inspire it with confidence and attachment; for it is, at least, a living object, and becomes a sensible and grateful companion.

We are born for society, and for the intercourse of each other. The faculties with which our organisation is endowed, and our disposition to virtue, can only be developed in our daily communication with beings of our own species. We ought, and must not avoid the society of man, nor bury ourselves in continual solitude. For the inability to commit sin does not constitute sanctity: he alone is holy who, surrounded by temptation and enticement, is enabled to resist their influence. He that buries his pound is not a faithful secretary of the Lord, but only he that works for the good of his brothers and the glory of God. (Luke xix. 12—26.)



Neither Jesus Christ, our divine model, nor his first disciples, absented themselves from the intercourse of men ; they did not banish themselves for life in solitude ; but they, on the contrary, mixed with the bustle and tumult of the world, in order to do good. They did not refuse to participate in friendly meetings and festivities ; neither did they deny to themselves the pleasures of society. He who wishes to sow for eternity must seek for the field wherein to plant his seed, and this field is the heart of man.

But of all social intercourse, that which is the most congenial to us, is the society we enjoy under our own roof, in the bosom of our family, and the friendship and intimacy of our friends ; for that which more immediately surrounds us and bears relationship with ourselves, must merit, above all, our attention and consideration. Upon the favourable or unfavourable arrangement of the circumstances of our domestic life depends whether our days shall be happy or miserable, filled with care and sorrow, or strewed with varied pleasures and enjoyments, rendered on that account more durable. This must be, naturally, the first and grand object of our care ; we may, then, consider the pleasures of the society which await us beyond our home. He that is unhappy in his domestic circle deserves our pity and commiseration ; for

his happiness must, then, depend merely upon strangers with whom he can pass but a very limited portion of his life.

But the peace and domestic felicity of home, that treasure and true foundation of our daily contentment and gratification, must be the work of our own hands. If we feel ourselves wretched in our own house, if in the circle of our relations and intimate friends we find no recreation or entertainment, the fault rests with ourselves; there must, on our part, be a want of either prudence or virtue. If we are not oppressed with want and all its attendant cares and anxieties, but the bitterness of which is softened by the affection of those who surround us, it must be our errors, our bad habits, and our vices, which cause the heavy weight of malediction to hang over our roof, and produce therein anarchy and disorder. We will either not consent ourselves to renounce certain offensive habits and customs, and thus practise self-denial; or we have not sufficient indulgence and charity, or friendly prudence, to try to gradually wean and break those of their faults with whom our lot in life is cast. The spirit of benevolence, and of mutual confidence, is banished from our home; and neither the happiness of peace, nor the blessings of domestic virtue, are to be found there. If, in our foolish and obstinate

madness, we plant thorns, how can we hope or expect to pluck roses !

Struggle against your faults, which wound and irritate others ; exercise charity, and show affection towards those you are in the habit of seeing daily, rather than towards those whom you meet but rarely ; banish your spirit of dominion, and destroy your evil temper ; avoid all that may interfere with the legitimate rights and pretensions of the companions of your life, and everything that may interrupt their contentment. Such a reformation will beautify and embellish your domestic existence ; a thousand little delights will make a heaven of that home which, hitherto, disunion and contention had rendered a hell. In one word, be wise ; be a christian, and you will be happy.

But the happiness we share in the bosom of our family ought not, however, to be a motive for us to exclude ourselves from all other society. The charms of domestic life doubtless merit a preference ; but those who are placed beyond our own immediate circle have also their rights to our intercourse. Not to enter at all in communication with others, is to neglect the means of extending our sphere of activity. When we pass our days exclusively with a few intimate associates only, we can only have a one-sided view of things ; we cannot come to know humanity under these impressions ; we pronounce

often an opinion and judgment completely false and at variance with justice; we are ignorant of the various sources of the evil we are taught to avoid, and we deprive ourselves of the opportunities for admiring and appreciating in others those virtues and graces which we ought to take for a model, and endeavour to make our own.

But the selection of the society which ought to add to the enjoyments of life, must not be indifferent to the Christian. It is important for his heart, his opinions, and his domestic peace, that he should proceed with the reflection and prudence which becomes the wise man. We are instructed by our own experience to know that we insensibly acquire certain qualities from those persons whose society we are in the habit of frequenting, and with whom we are pleased. We never remain entirely ourselves; but as in the vicinity of others we breathe the same air, so also we respire in a certain degree their principles and qualities. Tell me whom you visit, says the proverb, and I will tell you who you are, how you think, and what you are worth.

*Do not, therefore, make choice of suspicious society, dangerous for the purity of your manners, and the integrity of your heart.* Do not confide too much in your own strength and sentiments, but acknowledge, on the contrary, the power of example and custom, which gradually shakes and

destroys the most firm minds. *Honour your name, and honour the reputation of your house.* Let this be the rule for your conduct through life ; connect yourself with those whose known virtue and wisdom inspire your superiors with the desire to make your acquaintance, and be amongst the number of your friends. How many, by the imprudent selection of their associates, have banished from society men distinguished for the dignity of their sentiments, and have thus been the means of producing their personal degradation, without having themselves committed any wrong ! Imprudence is also a vice, if not of the heart, at least of the judgment ; and to obstinately persist in mad and unreasonable conduct, after the better mode of acting has been recognised, becomes a sin of the heart.

*Avoid, therefore, all society which does not contribute, at least by degrees, towards your moral improvement,* which does not associate you with estimable and amiable companions, but where vulgar pleasures, on the contrary, obtain the preference. Doubtless, when you seek society beyond your own roof, you do not so much think of the instruction and perfection of your soul ; your principal object is to divert your mind, to repose after your labours, and to recruit yourself. But you must acknowledge, that you often pay too



dear for a recreation when purchased at the expense and sacrifice of your better self; and you must further grant, that you degrade yourself if you find any taste in coarse and indecent amusements and entertainments. The most valuable and precious recreations are those which preserve the serenity of the mind without compromising our innocence, and in which the example of others renders us more noble, more complacent, and more amiable than we were previously.

*Do not select society, the conversation of which, instead of elevating your spirit, drags it into the abyss of daily corruption; where impure, equivocal puns, accompanied by the roaring laughter of men without education, pass for witticisms; where the venomous tongue of calumny incessantly attacks the character and honour of good men; where baseness of mind and wickedness of heart seek and find a pleasure in idle gossip, and in reporting with eager impatience, to and fro, all that happens, important or insignificant, in other houses, in order to be the means of eliciting envious and uncharitable remarks and criticisms. "Be not deceived; evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Cor. xv. 33).*

*Do not select society, to frequent which must produce, from your part, a greater expenditure than your income permits you to make; you may*

not perhaps find elsewhere connexions which appear to you so agreeable or inviting ; but that does not authorise you to cultivate the intercourse of company which will ruin your finances. A pleasure too dearly paid for, ceases to be a pleasure, because it is a crime committed against the sanctity of your domestic peace and welfare. When we allow ourselves to be allured and seduced into pleasures which occasion expenses out of proportion with our means, it rarely occurs through the difficulty of finding other more suitable society ; but rather, it is the result of pride and false ambition, or some other interested motive. He who is the slave of any passion whatever, whether it is of the mania to shine, to gamble, or any other, resembles the madman, who, in order to warm himself for an hour, sets fire to his own house. Such is the character of him, who, for the sake of a few jovial hours, destroys his domestic welfare, and prepares for himself many long years of mortification, want, and misery.

Unhappily, this evil—rather let us call it, this destructive madness—so fatal to all happiness, is too general in our days. Alas ! how few exist who know how to appreciate the value of domestic happiness ! How many senseless beings sacrifice, for expensive and ruinous pleasures abroad, all the comfort and delight they may possess at home !

In order to make a figure and shine in the eyes of others, they live miserably and niggardly in the bosom of their family. In order to make a display amongst strangers abroad, they abandon their children at home ; and, for the sake of variety and diversion afar from their domestic hearth, they plunge all that they ought to hold most dear on earth into anxiety and despair.

*In our intercourse with society, let us seek only an agreeable recreation and repose after the uniform and troublesome occupations of our calling ; only a refreshment of the spirit, which renders it more capable of serious application, or a pleasant and easy entertainment amidst an enjoyment shared by a circle of estimable persons. For the mere strengthening of our bodies, and the mere gratification of our sensual appetite, we have no need of society ; but it is quite different when it has for its object the nourishment of our mind. Therefore it is advantageous not to select for our companions those merely who are of our own opinion and judgment, or who are of the same age. The more varied the social life, the more valuable it becomes. In moderate and friendly contradiction, the mind develops new thoughts and ideas ; and we part with double pleasure from the society in which we have acquired information and instruction to convey to our quiet and peaceful abode. Not*

a moment of our existence ought to pass without profit to our mind, and even the most trivial joy ought to pay its tribute. Therefore, all who are still in the enjoyment of a cheerful and youthful age, far from avoiding the intercourse of men more advanced in years, ought to cultivate their society. It is thence that, without difficulty and sacrifice, experience may be obtained useful for the future; there, vivacity and light-heartedness may be united with calm dignity and sedateness, a union which must gain all hearts and conciliate all minds. Those also, who pride themselves upon their age and experience, should cordially mix with their juniors, both in years and maturity, whose gaiety and raillery will mollify their gravity, render them more tolerant in their opinions and judgment of the age, and, in recruiting their spirit, will dissipate the morose humour which often saddens and sours old age.

The first condition for the pleasures of social life is, *the art of living with others*. This art does not merely consist in the forms of politeness, in acknowledged and accepted ceremonies and customs, in easy manners, and outward decency; the true knowledge of living is of a more elevated order. It requires the avoidance of all objectionable and offensive habits and usages; it demands a pleasing and amiable manner of con-

duct and behaviour, which inspires every one with courage to approach us, and to feel happy in our society, so that, even the most complete stranger may feel himself at ease and at home with us. The foundation of the art of living in society is affection and charity, united with external grace.

Let us not imagine that these matters are of too little consequence to merit the serious attention of the Christian. No, nothing is trifling or indifferent which can contribute to the happiness of life or benefit of society. Nothing is to be despised which gives us the power of gaining the good-will and esteem of our fellow-creatures. As God loves his children, so ought we to love our contemporaries. Which is the man who commands more means, who possesses more power than others to distribute his benefits, and dispense happiness by his actions and counsel? It is not he, who seated on his throne beholds millions of slaves at his feet; but it is the man who reigns over all hearts by the confidence and attachment he inspires within them.

The voice of religion invites you to enjoy with prudence and wisdom the pleasures of social life; be therefore, in your intercourse with your friends and acquaintances, a man full of religion. When the cup of pleasure is presented to you, do not forswear your religion—that means, do not descend by intemperance, or any unreflected action, beneath



the dignity you ought to maintain as the child of the Almighty, as a champion aspiring to the immortal crown, as the inheritor of a celestial and sublime life! Enjoy the agreeable hours of this short existence, but with the wisdom of the man who loiters not on his way, plucking every flower he may meet with. Mix in the society of honest and cheerful men, but never without the intention of distinguishing yourself among them by an amiable morality; with the resolution of inspiring them with aversion for all that is ignoble, and with enthusiasm for all that is worthy of esteem and affection. Thus, amid such joy and pleasure, you will make them companions of eternity, and participators of immortal glory; and thus the spirit of Jesus, whose consolation penetrated your soul when overcome with sorrow, will hover, gloriously and triumphantly, over the joys and pleasures of your life.

Thus, O thou sublime model and author of human felicity, Jesus Christ, I shall be wise in Thy wisdom, and I shall know how to unite with the pleasures of existence, the delights of a pure soul, and the heavenly joys of universal charity!—AMEN.





## A MAN'S PRICE.

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GENESIS, xxxix. 9.

“There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”

HUMAN life presents one remarkable phenomenon, inasmuch as every individual sets the highest value on himself; every one regards the world as only existing for him, and considers himself as the centre around which everything else moves; and in spite of their pride, the majority of men are the slaves one of another, or of some comparatively valueless object, on which their desires are fixed. Nothing is more frequent than these contradictions in the heart of man,—extravagant pride, combined with forgetfulness of others' worth, or than this insatiable egotism with haughty contempt. We are justly astonished to find, that the frequent experience of this does not cause wise and prudent persons to keep a more attentive and watchful eye upon themselves.

*Every man may be bought, if we but know his price,* says the proverb. The more we know the human heart, the more convinced we shall be of this truth. A man of penetration, and adroit in divining his fellow-creatures, soon discovers at what price an individual is disposed to sell himself: he treats him accordingly; and, if the price is low, he makes him his slave.

*Every man may be bought for a certain price.* The haughty reader smiles, and says—"Doubtless there are many who are ready to sell, at the most contemptible price, their life, their honour, and their honesty; iniquitous judges allow themselves to be corrupted by presents; and fresh temptation will cause the libertine to forget all respect for innocence, for his own duty, and for his own reputation. But, as regards myself, you may give me millions, and promise me all the pleasures this world can afford, still you will never bribe me to commit a base or unworthy act!" This language certainly *appears* sincere; but once try to flatter his pride, and you will find him submit to your yoke. Offer him titles, honours, and all the distinction and respect which power commands, and be assured that, for this brilliant price, you will behold him consent to plunge a whole country in misery; place him in a situation, in which the revelation of a secret connected therewith, may

perhaps rob him of all public esteem, you will see him become a victim to all the fury of passion, capable of secretly committing fraud, felony, and even assassination; and if he cannot save himself by either of these means, he will complete the list of crimes with suicide! Alas! ye once happy countries, how many thousands of families have beheld their felicity within your bosom destroyed by the tyranny of an ambitious ruler! How many men have sacrificed their fortune, friendship, love, and even life itself, in order to preserve the honour of their name or house. Thus all these men sold themselves for some demonstrations of honour which they desired to retain, and which they would not survive.

How foolish, exclaims another, to burden ourselves with cares and anxieties, for the sake of the vain and empty noise of fame! Of what importance is it to us, whether the world shows us more or less esteem? Who knows not man, and the instability of his opinions—idolising to-day what he disdains to-morrow, and bowing with reverence before you when present, but despising you in the bottom of his heart. Greater distinction only creates more numerous rivals, and produces every degree of jealousy. No, you will say, never for such a price will I sacrifice the happiness and tranquillity of my days, or the principles which

guide my conduct, nor my life. It is thus that man speaks, and yet perhaps he would sell himself for even still less a price. Let him only be invited by those of whose unworthiness he has convincing proofs, and be hospitably entertained by them, we shall soon behold him acting the flatterer towards them; and in his enjoyment of the viands and wines placed before him, he will disclose his own secrets, and betray the confidence of his friends; he will allow his tongue free scope, and, banishing all feeling of morality and modesty, he will heartily join in, and contribute towards, the most shameful excesses. If he becomes poor, and is no longer capable of continuing to indulge in the expensive style of living he has hitherto enjoyed, he is unable to yield to his reduced circumstances, and live more moderately; the privation of his usual pleasures becomes intolerable, and he prefers even death to such a melancholy existence. How many rich spendthrifts, who have fallen into indigence, have become their own executioners, because they fancied, as their fortune was reduced, they had no longer wherewith to exist, although possessing sufficient to maintain perhaps several families! A wretched being of this cast would assuredly be purchaseable; for the sake of a few choice dishes and rare wines, and the accommodation of an



elegant mansion, he would not hesitate to plunge into corruption and crime.

• But such a man, exclaims another, can only truly be ranked among the very lowest of human kind. Never would *I* sink into such an abject state, or place myself so completely in the ranks of the brutes, as to live only for the sake of the pleasures and enjoyments of my palate. What need is there for all these luxuries and delicacies of the table? Is it not sufficient to eat and drink with moderation and temperance? And of what consequence are all such honours and distinctions? Is it not enough to be beyond the reach of scorn and hatred, and to have no cause to fear for the tranquillity of our life? No; to be, for such a price, so foolishly lavish of friendship, affection, peace of soul, and of life itself, is to place yourself in the very lowest degradation.—It is thus that this severe censurer speaks of all those who allow themselves to be purchased at such a low price. But what price does he himself require for his principles of virtue? Set the gaming-tables in order, shuffle the cards, and let the dice-box resound again amidst the glare of lights; assemble together a chosen few to risk the fleeting chances of fortune; and all this noble pride will disappear. The unhappy being presses forward with eager anxiety; he who before was, perhaps, the most feeling of

men, becomes now the most callous to the ruin of others; he who in all his transactions was the most conscientious of men, is now, by the interest of shameful gain, led to commit every sort of fraud, as long as it can be kept concealed; and he who was the most faithful husband and tender parent suddenly forgets, in the madness of passion, his hitherto beloved wife and children. He stakes and loses their patrimony—their only resource. Their lamentations have no effect upon him; their supplications, and the warnings of his friends and superiors, and the disapproving comments of his inferiors, are all vain and entirely useless. He continues to play; and if fortune turns from him her deceitful face, he is left without property, without any resource, despised by those who have robbed him; and, at length, is driven by despair and remorse to the most guilty extremes.

To gratify his passion and repair his losses he uses sums confided to his charge; he cheats the government and authorities; he commits forgery and perjury; nothing becomes too criminal for him, for he is now abandoned to crime: until at length, amidst the ruin of his fortune and honour, he ends by destroying himself. Alas! how many men, esteemed for their eminent qualities have, with their families, been for ever lost through the passion of gambling! And this man again was

venal, at the price of a pleasure ruinous both to his mind and health ; and he was ready to sell his soul for those emotions of pleasure and pain which succeed each other so swiftly round the gaming-table—the vile altar consecrated to the god of chance.

Every one may be bought at some price : *and you as well, perhaps.* What price do you put upon your fidelity, your innocence, your honesty ? You are astonished at the question—you do not believe that you would barter, for any price, your soul, your peace in this world, or your salvation in that to come. What ! have you, up to this moment, stood out so stoutly against all temptations, that not one—not even the most seductive—has taken effect upon you ? On every occasion when your loyalty, your chastity, your moderation, or your fidelity has been put to the trial, have you shrunk with horror from the temptation to sin, and exclaimed, with Joseph, “ How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God ? ”

The passion for play, perhaps, may not exert any influence over you, but is it so with vanity ? And if vanity has not the power to entice and mislead you into a false path, and into degradation of yourself, has envy no ascendancy over you ? If, however, it be not envy, perhaps it is pride which governs you ; or, if not pride, voluptuous-

ness ; or if not voluptuousness, yet the love of gain and riches ? But if it is not a love for riches, may it not be the fear of shame, or the opposite disposition—a love of looking down upon your fellow-creatures, and a pleasure in witnessing their misfortunes ? Alas ! if I was to enumerate the whole series of human infirmities, I should find, perhaps, more than one price at which you might be purchased. Every man may be bought at some price : what price is yours ? *Have you ever reflected upon the subject ?* Lock yourself up in your study ; and there, in the silence of conscientious meditation, examine at what price you would be willing to sell yourself. Examine what may have been your conduct during the present year ; I require nothing more from you. Render an account to yourself of your secret thoughts, and of your silent wishes, during that period. You will soon recognise those of your infirmities, which, if powerfully attacked, would immediately discover the price at which you hold your virtue, your Christianity, your peace upon earth, and your eternal happiness. You shudder, and refuse to search within yourself ? Oh, if you value your virtue, and your present and future felicity, do not shrink from this examination of yourself. The moment when you discover the true state of your soul, your vulnerable side, and the rocks which

threaten your salvation, that will be a grand and decisive moment in the career of your life. The moment which arouses your attention, and brings back your thoughts and recollection to yourself, will decide perhaps whether you will sell yourself some day, with all that you may hold sacred, for a low price, for the gratification of base passion, for worldly scruples,—or whether, master of your own heart, you will belong for ever to *yourself* and your God.

O Thou Searcher of all consciences! I humbly prostrate myself before Thee. I am not worthy of the mercy that Thou hast shown unto me from my earliest childhood. What dignity hast Thou not imprinted in my nature, and what trifling value do I attach thereto! *I am thy creature*, O God—thy child, O Father! Thou who dost load me with grace and favour; and yet I abandon thy grace and myself for the sake of a vain possession, an abject and gross pleasure! I am a human being, and occupy an honourable position in the scale of created beings, elevated above myriads of other creatures who are not gifted like myself with reason, intelligence, and the truth Thou hast revealed unto me; but yet, unfaithful to my honour, I forget and tread under foot my own dignity for objects to which the brute placed below me pays no regard or attention. By my pleasures, by my



hopes and affections, by my antipathies and desires, I too often degenerate into the rank of the unreasoning brute.

*I am called to immortality !* The gates of eternity open before me, and I have access to those blissful enjoyments of which here below I can scarcely imagine the delight. Thousands of beings of another nature die each year around me and at my feet. They lived—but are now no more. I alone, elevated above them, and enlightened by God, I alone am born for immortality. How have I merited that privilege, and that preference above millions of other creatures? *I am freed and ransomed from death by the blood of Jesus.* The God-Man appeared, and showed me the path which led towards his Father; he sanctified my spirit by his doctrine; and his blood, upon Golgotha, sealed the sacred work of redemption. Woe to me who, when temptation allured me, lost sight of the doctrine which Jesus designed to purify me of my sins! How little have I accomplished of the works of a Christian, whilst the words of faith flowed so rapidly from my lips! In order to satisfy an unlawful desire, which has soon left me nought else behind but repentance, I have renounced myself and redemption. How often have I shown myself feeble, miserable—I, coming from God, created after his

own image, destined for immortality, and redeemed by Jesus!

Alas! what anguish overwhelms me. How am I fallen so low? Have I wanted instruction? Have I not been warned by the words of Jesus, by my father, my mother, and friends? Have I not been instructed by the fate of others, which presented to me the sad results of injustice? Why have I so rarely exercised over myself a sway worthy of the high destinies of man, and by which he is alone distinguished from those animals that are the slaves of their appetite and of a blind instinct? What have I gained by abandoning myself to my passions? The pleasure of a moment, and years of pain and regret. Whence does it arise that so many persons are afflicted in their soul? Alas! they have sold themselves for a wretched price, and they now must expiate their folly—a just chastisement for their voluntary slavery.

Happy for me it is that this hour has so unexpectedly brought me back to myself! I bless thee, hour of salvation; thou hast been sent to me by divine solicitude and forbearance. I know the price for which I constantly run the risk of selling myself; grant that I may be enabled to repel it far from me! And if temptation should again renew its efforts to degrade me again, I will raise

my eyes to heaven, and fix them upon my eternal destiny—upon Him who in Gethsemane shed drops of blood; and I will say, How can I commit so great an evil, and sin against the Lord my God?

I may exchange dust for dust, goods for goods; but never let me exchange the perfection of the mind for the satisfaction of vulgar and rude passions—never the internal contentment of the soul for the momentary intoxication of the senses and heart. Of what benefit would be to me the gain of the entire world, if I had, at the same time, lost possession of my soul?

No price can purchase the truths proclaimed by Jesus, the virtues of the Christian, and the approbation of God; for what else in the universe can have any value if all that is divine cannot command its price? It was for those the God-Man sacrificed his holy life when the world of sinners condemned him; it was for that the apostles of Jesus died a death of torture; it was for that the first martyrs of the church endured with joy poverty, persecution, shame, chains, torture, and death. It is for that the names of these just and magnanimous men are inscribed, in letters of gold, in the records of heaven and annals of history. Their greatness of soul, the power and influence they exercised over themselves, delight us even in the present day. Yes, there is still something more elevated

than the power of the world—than the honours of the earth—than tons of gold—than the seductions of beauty and glory—or any and everything that can captivate the senses. Something yet exists which cannot be purchased at the price of all those glories of life which the voice of passion exalts, and which once the tempter offered to Jesus in the desert and on the top of the mountain—this is *the image of God in a virtuous soul*, which lifts its thoughts and feelings beyond this earthly existence to the regions of eternity.

Alas! how distant still is my soul from this resemblance to God! Loaded with all the weight of my sins, dare I venture, merciful Father, to raise my eyes towards thee? May I venture to invoke thee? Alas! I tremble at my own degradation—but thou, beneficent Being, have pity upon me, and be merciful to me, a miserable sinner.—  
AMEN.





## CIRCUMSPECTION IN THE CHOICE OF FRIENDS.

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ECCLESIASTICUS, vi. 16.

“A faithful friend is the medicine of life; and they that fear the Lord shall find him.”

AMONG good and sensible people, we often hear a half-suppressed and sorrowing complaint of the want of true friendship, and even of the general indisposition that exists for cherishing those affectionate ties of relationship which attach men more intimately one to the other. But is this possible? Do we not find numerous instances of sincere and heroic friendship in ancient as well as modern times? Do not all men, more or less, feel the desire to love and to be beloved? Does not the name of friend continue to be regarded as the title of honour which we give to persons we hold most dear and estimable?

Yes, there is still to be found upon the earth true and sincere friendship, both among persons



cultivated and of correct morals, as well as among the rude and more or less sophisticated classes of society. We have found examples of faithful reciprocal friendship where we least of all expected to meet with such tender feelings—amongst wicked and profligate characters, whose hearts have remained attached to each other until the day of their death.

What, in fact, is life without friendship? It is a desert through which man wanders in solitude, where nothing belongs to him; no person notices or sympathises with him, whether in his pleasures or his pains; where, doubtlessly, he perceives forms resembling himself, but who pass by him coldly, as inhabitants of another sphere, with which he has no tie of connection.

But place the most uncultivated and ignorant of men in solitude, and he will still desire to have some society; he will not wish to be abandoned to himself. He will demand and return affection; he will make even the rocks his confidants, and he will tame the wild animals themselves in order to gain their attachment and fidelity. Man neither can nor will live alone, and without being beloved; he will excite interest and sympathy, without which life is but of little value to him. In all that he is, he is less for himself than for others. He thirsts after their applause: to please them he adorns

himself: to merit their gratitude he rushes boldly to encounter death. For their approbation he sacrifices his repose and his enjoyment. Finally, in order not to frighten them from him, he conceals the defects which disfigure him.

Thus, friendship is felt to be desirable and necessary everywhere; nature has implanted it within our souls; and he who knows not the feeling, is an anomaly in human nature; a monster, and a being without reason or sentiment. This necessity develops itself from earliest infancy; and the child itself places a general confidence in the heart of man and his affections, equally as it opens its own heart to whoever evinces kindness and benevolence towards it. But with its growing experience, its timidity likewise increases. Repulsed by the rude exterior of man, or by his indifference, and often deceived, it retires within itself. The young man refuses to none his confidence and affection; but, at the same time, he does not calculate upon a return, although it is the desire of his heart. He longs for, at least, *one* soul to unite itself with his own, to which he may confide himself entirely, and communicate his wishes and plans; with which he may exchange consolation and affection—one, in fact, who by affectionate solicitude may assist him to walk in the path of life with more firmness, confidence, and joy.

Whence, therefore, does it arise that amidst this universal desire, felt by every mortal, to possess a faithful friend, by whom he may be sincerely loved and appreciated, and by whom, however he may be misunderstood by others, he never can be misconceived, the complaint is found to be so general of the want of pure and genuine friendship?

You, who make this complaint, ought, before you condemn those who are its object, to examine well whom you are most justified in condemning. *Examine yourself first if, on every occasion, you have yourself proved to be a sure and faithful friend.* Reflect, and consider well what you may have been to others; ascertain if, in contracting a tie of friendship, you have not yielded to a sort of exalted and enthusiastic expectation, and if your exactions from that friend have not been unjust; whether the friend you had chosen was capable of responding completely to your ideas; whether, in forming this bond of friendship, you have not been guided more by vague and fantastic feelings than by prudent and discreet motives; and whether you have not deceived yourself far more than you have been deceived by your friend.

*The germ which produces the rupture of a connection is usually planted the moment this union is formed.* At such a moment we are rarely in possession of the requisite calmness and reflection; friendships are

often formed on occasions when the heart, elated with joy, unfolds itself in spite of the whole world; and, captivated by the prepossessing and attractive exterior of our acquaintance, we feel an impatient desire to become his friend. The agreeable impression made upon our mind soon becomes more and more forcible; it produces within us the most flattering and seducing illusions; and we crown our error in attributing to the cherished individual various virtues which elevate him, in our opinion, above ourselves. Often our flattered vanity makes us desirous to form a friendship with a person generally distinguished and admired; and we imagine ourselves exalted in the opinion of others, if we can boast of having inspired him with esteem, confidence, and attachment.

But mature reflection does not always sanction and confirm a union contracted under the seduction of such deceptive feelings. Doubtlessly, you ought to attach yourself to your friend with all your heart; but it is your reason which should guide your choice. The sentiment by which you are influenced never judges, but blindly demands what it wishes, excited and subdued by external delights, or by vanity. Reason, on the contrary, desires nothing it does not intimately know—nothing it has not thoroughly examined in all its bearings. The impression a prepossessing indivi-

dual makes upon us easily seduces the imagination, and we take this impression as a guarantee for a multitude of other good qualities; not that the person appeared to us to be worthy of our friendship on account of these merits, but because without them we should cease to think him amiable, and we are resolved to give him our hand of friendship.

This is one of the most common errors observed in forming a friendship, particularly in youth, when the heart is excited by its warm and enthusiastic emotions, and when the imagination exercises dominion over the reason. Such cases are most frequent amongst young people of different sexes, because the awakening propensities and inclinations of nature combine with the general desire of friendship, vanity, and self-love; and the feelings thus excited get beyond control, and thenceforth sway with all the power of a passion.

But when, by means of repeated experience, our reason is undeceived, and, becoming more enlightened, it gains the requisite strength for promoting our real happiness, time then gradually and unobservedly subdues this warmth of feeling. In proportion to the progression of reason, and the diminution of a too active sensibility, the apparent happiness of marriages which are concluded with imprudent haste and rashness, gradually dwindles away. Custom, and the monotony



of daily habit, satiate, at length, all desire; and unhappy, indeed, is the individual who is not able to find in the object beloved aught to satisfy the enduring demands of reason! Woe to us if, in the uniformity of life, the brilliant illusions with which we charmed our mind vanish; if, to gratify a blind passion, instead of attaching ourselves to lasting worth and merit, we have sacrificed to outward attractions liberty, the esteem of friends, the affection of our family, the means of becoming useful members of society, and every prospect of future peace and comfort!

*Let your friendship be the effect of your own free choice.* Your selection of a friend, whether male or female, can never, however, be free and optional as long as your judgment is enchained by your senses, your vanity, and egotism. The preference dictated by passion ceases with the passion. If you cannot rely on your own strength, then have recourse to more enlightened and impartial advice.

Whilst the heart blindly craves a reciprocity of affection, reason should prudently urge us to shun an intimacy where we feel it is doubtful the party may please us equally when the attractions by which we were first captivated have passed away. If it be the charms of face and form which have seduced you, imagine to yourself those features and that figure changed by disease or accident to

deformity. Is it rank and external circumstances which have influenced your choice? then ask yourself if you would still love that person, supposing she were subsequently placed in an inferior station of life to yourself. Or is it the gold possessed by the person you wish to call your friend that has attracted you? if so, then demand of yourself if, when deprived of that qualification, you will view that friend with the same partiality of affection.

*To ensure a lasting friendship it is especially necessary that there be equality of station.* No doubt, we can love and esteem persons in a high or low rank of society with the same sincerity as our equals; we may inspire them with the esteem they confer upon those of their own condition. Nevertheless, there is an important difference between such feelings and the more confiding sentiments which create and justify a more intimate friendship.

When fortune distributes unequally its favours to two old friends, we do not always find the more favoured disacknowledge the rights of his friend who still remains in obscurity, nor refuse him his affection: nevertheless, the inequality of their position may alter the sincerity of their reciprocal relations, and prejudice or even terminate their intimacy altogether. It is necessary that, between friends, an equal proportion of confidence should exist. But how long can this confidence last, if one

friend acquires the right of command, and the other, in duty, is forced to obey? Can a magistrate, promoted to dignity, continue to retain without danger, as a confidant, one of his subordinate officers, and entrust to him his own affairs? How many cases there are, where a superior is forced to exercise towards his inferiors an exact and rigorous justice! Can the course of justice ever be allowed to be arrested by what may be thought a claim of friendship? Is the man, high in official dignity and influence, ever assured that there is not, perhaps, selfishness in the attachment shown towards him by his subordinate? Does not the inferior in office feel vexed and mortified when his superior, whom he calls his friend, attentive to the imperious rules of etiquette, treats him, in public, as a stranger, and with an air of indifference? Thence it is said, and not without reason, that it is very rare that sovereigns possess true friends; for rare, indeed, are the subjects sufficiently wise to attach themselves to a sovereign without any views of interest: and rare enough do we find the monarch sufficiently good or happy to inspire affection in the heart of a true sage, born amidst the class of his subjects.

Experience has sufficiently proved, that sincere and lasting friendships are more easily formed between persons of opposite character and different

opinions, than between those separated merely by the distinctions of sex and condition of life.

But all contracted friendships must totter at their foundation, if they are not, above all things, based upon a mutually real and sincere esteem, justified by true merit; for it is indubitable merit recognised in a friend, which alone can excite real esteem and lasting attachment. He that has more infirmities than ourselves will appear to us despicable, as soon as the glare which dazzled our eyes has vanished. There are many who are more skilled in making friends than retaining them. They gain the heart by their prepossessing manners, the brilliancy of their wit, and their instructive conversation, which render their society agreeable and entertaining: but perhaps these graces are but a robe of ceremony, which they lay aside as soon as they have quitted strange company, and can, without offending decency, give themselves up to their own caprices, their low desires, and their unstable and irregular inclinations. The inexperienced are at first delighted and charmed; but when they have time to observe them more closely, they blush at their previous credulity and weakness.

The tender inclination and desire for friendship which God has planted within our heart, are in themselves nothing more or less than a secret incentive to aid in concert together towards good,

and to work for our mutual perfection. As long as this divine feeling stimulates us to strive for our own ennoblement, that we may be still more worthy of the esteem of the person we love, friendship is a source of blessings; but this source becomes exhausted and dried up the moment we cease to find in a friend, or possess ourselves, those qualities which render such a union estimable.

Therefore, if we would make a happy choice, *let us only give our friendly confidence to one whom we have long known, and whom we have had opportunities of observing in various situations of life.* The external advantages of figure, the charm of conversation, riches, and reputation, are not sure and certain guarantees of sincerity and constancy in friendship. These guarantees are found only in most convincing proofs of virtuous sentiments, of steady firmness of character, of discretion, and disinterestedness. Woe to us, if we do not base our relations of friendship upon these qualities, which form its most firm and lasting support! if, carried away by the impetuosity of our heart, or seduced by an ardent imagination, we believe in the reality of the fantastic virtues with which we love to invest the person whom we fancy to be worthy of our friendship, because we wish to find him amiable. Alas! sooner or later, we must



expiate our folly with lamentation, mortification, and regret.

It is the more necessary that we should be on our guard in this respect, as we cannot conceal from ourselves that the least interruption of an intimacy or the relations of friendly confidence, may be followed by consequences most injurious to domestic peace and happiness of life. A mere trifle may break for ever the bond of friendship; an apparent coldness, a little reserve, some involuntary negligence, or unhappy mistake, and the injurious intermeddling of some officious tatler and gossip; either of these, or even less important causes, are quite sufficient to produce an eternal estrangement between the most intimate friends. And if your friend ceases to be such, or if he to whom you have opened without any reserve the secrets of your heart, has ceased to merit your esteem, what becomes of this your second self—the depository of all your secrets, the sympathising confidant of all your foibles and failings? Are you sure that his character is worthy of the esteem you have accorded to him? Who will guarantee that he will never abuse the confidence you have placed in him? And even if, after the cessation of your connection, he does not betray you, will you not still experience some inquietude of mind to know that you have placed yourself in his power,

and that you cannot make yourself quite independent of him?

What mature reflection ought therefore to precede the choice of an intimate and confidential friend! The evils and misfortunes of many families have been produced through the rupture of friendships too hastily and easily formed. A tender and faithful attachment unto death, can only be found to exist where high strength of character is combined with pious and pure virtue.

Happy indeed is he to whom this privilege has been granted, to whose lot this happiness has fallen; and truly may we repeat: "A faithful friend is the medicine of life; and they that fear the Lord shall find him."

O Thou most holy of beings! only he who adores and loves Thee with filial love, who shuns the path of sin, is capable of this pure and noble friendship, the blossoms of which are far above the dust of the earth, and the fruits of which ripen unto eternity. All that is of the earth, and springs therefrom, is transitory and perishes; and thus pass away the enjoyments and pleasures of beauty, pride, and selfishness. But virtue remains imperishable, as well as the friendship founded upon virtue; whilst evil cannot attach itself firmly to evil, for how unite by an indissoluble tie that which, divided in itself, bears in itself the germ of

destruction? But virtue remains united to virtue, and good to good; for they participate in Thy nature, O Divine Love, Thou that purifiest all things in thy divine essence! Holy and paternal friend of thy creatures, I will love Thee with a tender and religious love until my last sigh; and thus the happiness of a virtuous and true friendship shall remain my portion for ever!—AMEN.





## DISCRETION IN CONVERSATION.

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PROVERBS, XXV. 9.

“Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another.”

OUR inconsiderate and mischievous carelessness in the words we use is a cause, which too often escapes observation, of numerous misunderstandings and schisms, which affect as well ourselves individually as the world generally. What vexation and animosity do we not produce, without perhaps being aware of it, through a too candid and incautious sincerity! Thence, for guidance through life, one of the most important rules is that which is pointed out to us by the Holy Scripture, and which is recommended to us for adoption in the following words: “For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that he speak no guile.” (1 Peter iii. 10.)

To speak well is an art; but to be silent is more

consummate skill: "For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." (James iii. 2.)

Speak when it is requisite; but be silent when to speak would be injurious. This short maxim embraces two equally important and valuable virtues, *sincerity and discretion in conversation*.

In passing through our cities and our villages, what distrust and suspicion do we not everywhere encounter! With what mistrust does not each regard the other! What hypocrisy and deception may there not be observed in the smiles that pass from one to the other! Whence arises this want of confidence and cordiality? To this we answer, that the cause may be traced to one of two evils, or to both: a too thoughtless and inconsiderate use of speech, or a silence observed and maintained at unseasonable moments.

How many families, formerly intimately connected, are at present at variance, and separated from each other, by bitter animosity! And yet neither fraud nor oppression is the cause. What, then, has produced this division? Incautious and imprudent conversation!

You complain of the want of true and faithful friends; you murmur at the coldness, nay hatred, observed towards you, and of the false interpreta-



tions given to all your words. You know not wherefore you have merited this treatment; for you are convinced within yourself that you feel charitably towards all, and have a willing promptitude to assist all who require your aid, and are ever on the alert to act friendly towards your associates and neighbours; in fact, you feel nothing wherewith to reproach yourself, and yet, nevertheless, you are treated with neglect and suspicion. How is this? Because, no doubt, in some moment of irritation, you have thoughtlessly allowed your tongue too great a licence, or you have inconsiderately pronounced an opinion and judgment upon this or that person, which has produced a dislike towards you from the object of your remarks, and excited the distrust and ill-will of those who may have witnessed the candid but too hearty expression of your observations. Perhaps you may not be able to recollect either the particular words you have used, nor even the circumstance of having acted so imprudently. The language which in the heat of conversation you may have dropped, but to which you attached no value, because it emanated from no bad motive, has, doubtlessly, become completely obliterated from your memory. But let it ever be remembered, that he who fights with his sword in battle may quite forget the enemies he has wounded; but those who suffer from the

wounds he has inflicted, continue to remember them as long as the scars remain.

Therefore, let every Christian, in his intercourse with the world, regulate his conduct according to the rule pointed out by holy Scripture: "Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself, and discover not a secret to another."

We generally form to ourselves completely false notions of the discretion we should use in our conversation; inasmuch as we imagine it merely consists in the observance of silence upon the confidential communication made to us by our friends with respect to their plans, their connections, and the circumstances of their position. We fancy we have already merited the reputation of being discreet, if we hold sacred the information we may have received expressly under the seal of secrecy.

But such, however, is not the case. He alone acts with true discretion, who preserves secret within his breast what he knows to be secret, whether it may have been confided to him as such, or whether he has himself discovered it to be so. The wise man, however, considers as secret every thing a person may wish not to be known, from the fear that its communication may produce prejudicial results. Therefore, do not consider yourself at all authorised to reveal what others may

wish to be kept secret, unless a more important and imperious duty commands you to make the communication.

Amongst the number of subjects which we are unwilling to make public, and which we deem it right to keep secret, we must not only include our several schemes and plans, which, if they be made known too prematurely, might be frustrated, but also domestic incidents and events, affairs of property and certain connections, with a thousand different other matters, which we never wish to have the world to know ; because, too often, the most malignant interpretation is given to what may be most innocent and pure in itself, and upon which evil-minded persons are too happy to place a wrong and dangerous construction. Further, our vices, our errors and infirmities, of which we feel ashamed, and which we struggle to overcome, but which we never could wish to exhibit before the public eye, belong to the number of secrets we desire to hold sacred ; and, finally, we must add to the same class such language and opinions as are expressed in confidential circles, which, however true and correct, must produce the most injurious consequences if made publicly known.

Thus, then, you are bound to consider everything secret which for a moment you believe might, by its communication, create pain and dis-

pleasure in the mind of another ; and in this sense you ought to act with the same regard for the interest of others, as you would wish to see observed towards yourself. No person has the right to make known the affairs of others, if they themselves wish them to be held secret. The confidential communication made to you is not your own property ; to communicate it to the public against the will or knowledge of your friends, is to commit an offence, and to infringe their rights.

An immoderate inclination for talking is usually the result of a degenerate vivacity of mind and character ; more frequently, however, it is produced by a desire to become important in the eyes of others, and to make a display of the opinions held ; and very often it arises from wickedness and a malicious pleasure.

It is, therefore, generally reasonable to attribute badness of heart to those who take delight in divulging the actions and words of others, which ought more properly to be kept private ; or who make the subject of their conversation the infirmities and errors of their neighbours, and reveal such domestic transactions and circumstances as ought to be held sacred.

While we keep silence upon the affairs of others, we should likewise avoid publishing anything which may raise a prejudice against them ;

making it a law never to express an unfavourable opinion upon the conduct or character of any person, until you have very maturely considered it. Be cautious never to repeat, even within the circle of your most intimate friends, any words or opinions, if they are connected with the interests of persons unknown to you, or if you at all suppose that they have resulted from imprudence, or if that, by repeating them, you may injure your neighbour; as the conduct of others does not authorise you to imitate them.

Should you happen to be present when in conversation censures are expressed against your neighbour, take no share in the discourse, if you are not in a state to defend substantially and upon a sure footing, but at the same time with modesty, the reputation you hear attacked. Silence itself is often the greatest eloquence, and finds its reward in the esteem of intelligent men; besides, it never excites hatred. Sooner or later, the person whose conduct has undergone such scrutiny, must hear of the conversation in which he has been commented upon, and he will know how to appreciate and honour a silence, equally wise and considerate. You will find that by this you have gained the heart of your neighbour, without having found it necessary even to open your mouth in his defence.

There are cases wherein it is impossible to



avoid discussing the affairs of others. On such occasions, whether in public or in private society, make it your duty to point out especially all the good you know of those persons ; dwell upon their better qualities, the friendly and indulgent opinions they have expressed of others, and their individual acts of kindness. The praises you bestow will conciliate the affection and esteem of your audience ; you will inculcate sentiments of friendship and concord ; you will increase mutual complacency, and you will yourself have the gratification of culling the richest fruits of this good work ; for you will have gained the friendship of him towards whom you have rendered justice, as well as that of his old and newly-created friends.

Be careful to avoid, rather than to seek every occasion to learn the secrets of others ; for the less you know, the more tranquil will you feel within yourself, and the more open and sincerely will you act in all your dealings. The mere circumstance of possessing a secret will expose you to the danger of betraying it, without wishing to do so, either by some look or overt act, which will cause you a blush of confusion and greatly embarrass you. At other times it will place you under the painful obligation of appearing as a witness, and thus involve you in difficulties productive of the most

injurious consequences. But often, however strictly you may have observed the silence imposed upon you, it causes you to run the risk of appearing in the eyes of the world as a traitor, if others, without any conscience, treacherously reveal the secret they may have shared with you ; for there are too many who are thoughtless enough to confide their secrets to more than one or two individuals. Thus, although you may be innocent yourself, yet the fact of your being associated with such men in confidential communication, will cause you the loss of the confidence of honest men !

If by means of your profession, your personal connexions, and your general observations, you are made acquainted with some circumstance which the person whom it regards wishes or ought to keep secret, banish it from your mind, and force yourself to forget it. Conceal even from yourself what you ought to conceal from others ; and fly from every opportunity which might lead to the belief that you are initiated in the secret. Do not confide it to your most intimate friend, for you cannot know how long his friendship may continue.

We are not permitted to reveal the secrets of others, except when a superior duty commands us to do so ; for instance, in the case where such an

exposure is demanded by law and the authority of the common weal; for here silence would become a crime. It is a duty to speak when the secret with which we are acquainted contains dangerous plans against the rights of mankind. To be silent would make us accessaries to the work of wickedness, and thus concur in the destruction of society. It is our duty to speak when we know the mode of thinking and the position of persons in whom others place an excessive and dangerous confidence. In such circumstances, it is the duty of the friend of humanity to step forward and communicate to his neighbour the information he has to give, and to warn him of the danger with which he is threatened. It is, finally, our duty to break this silence when we can unmask vice, and when its observance would only confirm persons in their corruption, and strengthen them in their malice and selfishness, ever ready to create misfortune and to interrupt the happiness of others. To conceal vice in such cases, and permit it to remain unpunished, would be to favour the evil to the prejudice of the good.

These are the only circumstances which sanction the disclosure of secrets at our command, or the expression of our opinion upon the infirmities, the plans, the intentions, and the position of those connected therewith. These disclosures become

condemnable when their object is merely to amuse society at the expense of those who may be absent, or when they are made by the relator the vehicle of a certain self-importance in the eyes of those that listen to him. Thus we degrade ourselves to the rank of those indiscreet and dangerous talkers against whom sensible persons arm themselves with all possible prudence. We can attribute to our own conduct only, the hatred of our numerous enemies, the contempt of our contemporaries, and the general suspicion excited which paralyses talents and efforts that might otherwise be consecrated to the production of good.

*To be discreet in yourself and your own affairs*, is also a duty imposed upon man for the interest of his happiness and repose. Sincerity is incontestably a virtue ; but there can be no real virtue if it be not accompanied with prudence.

To live happily, be silent upon the happiness you enjoy. Be cautious in too hastily confiding to others the prosperous state of your circumstances ; you will only draw against you the envy and disfavour of persons where you least expect it. Be also, on the other hand, extremely careful not to reveal to others, without due reflection, the embarrassed position of your affairs ; for you will, otherwise, run a risk to lose your credit, and deprive yourself of the means of extricating

yourself. Do not, again, imprudently communicate your intentions and plans ; for many have witnessed the complete disappointment of all their hopes and expectations, through the malice and envy of men to whom they have too prematurely made known their views and projects. Motives were invented for them which they never contemplated, their honest wishes were misinterpreted, and the efficacy of all their endeavours was rendered unavailable through mockery and derision.

Be silent upon the subject of your own infirmities and faults : to boast of your follies and vices is but poor and senseless glory. But we, nevertheless, often hear persons talk, in a lively style, of their errors and vicious propensities.

It is not wise or proper to make known your affairs, except when silence might produce injurious consequences, and when it becomes a duty to communicate to another your thoughts, ideas, and your circumstances, that he may not form, either to the detriment of you or himself, an opinion too favourable or too injurious.

Preserve silence upon your own affairs, without, however, letting it affect the good understanding which must promote, and which it must be your object to maintain, in all your commercial relations of life. Be communicative, wherever you can be so without producing inconvenience or annoyance.



You run but little risk, when you speak only from pure and good motives.

Be discreet upon your own affairs where premature communication might rouse against your plans enemies who may still be asleep. But let not this be a motive for enveloping under the veil of mystery all your designs and intentions: an excess of circumspection produces effects equally vexatious to the want of caution. If you adopt the habit of attaching to the most trivial matters the importance of secrets, you expose yourself to the danger of being punished by ridicule.

Be discreet in your own affairs, and in those of others, when their communication might produce injury; and you will thus gain the esteem of all honest men. No person has ever conciliated friendship and love by a too honest and open-hearted communication of his own secrets or those of others; but, on the contrary, he has excited the just and natural suspicion that he who divulges, without occasion, his own affairs, cannot be silent upon the circumstances of others. And even those themselves who seek to draw the secrets from him, far from praising his sincerity, treat him as a fool, and make a bad use of his imprudence as soon as a profitable opportunity offers itself.

To be “as wise as the serpent, and simple as the dove,” is what thou, O Jesus, didst recommend

thy disciples ; Thou who hast shown and taught supreme wisdom in thy earthly career ! And I, too, feel how necessary it is to my repose, and the happiness of those that surround me, that I should learn to make a prudent use of my tongue ; to speak only at proper periods, and to be silent at seasonable moments. I feel that inconsiderate candour and open-heartedness, far from being virtue, are too often treachery towards my fellow-creatures.

Henceforth, therefore, I will make circumspection of speech one of my first Christian duties and laws in my intercourse with men. For it is my duty, O Lord, my Divine Example, to imitate Thee, and spread happiness around me in the world with all my power. But the tongue which poisons confidence and sows discord and aversion, destroys the peace and concord which ought to unite the hearts of men to each other.

What right have I to withdraw the veil which conceals the secrets of my brethren, and thus discover to the eyes of the world the infirmities they would have wished to remain unknown even to themselves ? How painfully does it hurt and mortify my feelings when my faults and transgressions are made known, without any pity or charity, to the whole world, and I am thus for ever deprived of the esteem and confidence of good

and worthy men ! Let us, therefore, be cautious, not to do unto others what we would not they should do unto us ! This, O my Saviour, thou hast taught ; and it shall, in future, be the rule of my conduct through life.—AMEN.





## NECESSARY FALSEHOODS.

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ST. LUKE, xxii. 55, 56, 57.

“And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him. And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.”

A SERVANT maid, on seeing the disciple of Jesus seated near the fire in the house of the high priest, while Christ awaited the sentence of death, and a similar fate threatened all his disciples, exclaimed, “And this man was also with him.” But Peter, full of fear and terror, renounced the Messiah, and said, “*Woman, I know him not!*”

Exposed as he was to imminent and fatal danger, did Peter act rightly to renounce his Master and say, I know him not? Perhaps every one who reads or hears these words, will exclaim aloud, “Far be from me such language! I, in his place, would never have denied my Saviour!” But many will think in their heart, “Could he have

acted otherwise? Was he not certain of running the same risk of cruel sacrifice in speaking the truth? Did he not already read the condemnation of Jesus upon the lips of all the witnesses and judges? Could he have saved Jesus from the fury of the Jews by his confession? Was it not reasonable that he should endeavour, at least, to save his own life? Did not an opportune falsehood become here a duty, or was it not commanded by prudence?"

Thus many, placing themselves in the difficult situation of the disciple, may think within themselves, although ashamed to say so openly. But Peter, as soon as he had recovered from his first alarm, found that what he had done was both unjust and imprudent, and, deeply penetrated with the error he had committed, he wept bitterly. He felt that he had not returned the immense love of Jesus. Where is the father who, loving his child, would renounce it in the moment of danger? Where is the mother who, inspired by her maternal devotion, would not expose her own life to save that of her child, or would abandon it in the hour of danger? True affection forgets and sacrifices all, and only thinks of the one beloved object. Peter felt he had not returned to Jesus love for love. He painfully felt that he had not only shown a want of love,



but also of justice, to Jesus; for the object here was not merely the salvation of his own life, or that of Jesus, but also to render homage to the truth which Jesus had so intrepidly avowed before the enraged judges. The step most important to be taken was to oppose false witnesses with true witnesses, who would come forward and say, "Yes, this Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, and the Saviour of the world!" It was necessary, in order to encourage the faithful, to show publicly that the disciples were animated by his spirit, and were ready to sacrifice their lives, and everything they possessed, for the Truth. But Peter, although persuaded of the truth of the doctrine of Jesus, and of the power of its virtue to save sinners, had not the courage to become the first martyr for his religion. Must not Christ himself have appeared to have lost his authority in the eyes of his enemies, who beheld not one of his disciples possessed of sufficient resolution to acknowledge him at the decisive moment? How could he inspire with his divine word the whole of Israel, and humanity itself, he who had not even animated with his fire his most intimate friends and his own disciples? All this Peter had not considered in the first moment of his agitation; and the tears of shame and repentance came too late.

But Peter denied Jesus in the first excitement of the moment. How many disciples of that Divine Master renounce him still, in the present day, before the world, and that, too, deliberately!

Jesus no longer exists in person amongst us, but his spirit continues to live in his doctrine. He who abjures the faith and truth which Jesus preached, denies Jesus himself. The lukewarmness which is evinced in our days, in the practice of Christianity, leads to our bending its principles to circumstances and seasons. We do not conform in our life and actions to our religion, but we make our religion yield to the influence of our life and actions. We do not adapt ourselves to eternal and immutable virtue, but we make virtue bend to our convenience. Instead of love to man and the wisdom of God, we possess only sordid selfishness, and an artful cunning, which we dignify by the name of prudence.

Thence originate the maxims, which have grown into proverbs, and which strikingly prove the moral degeneration of Christians; as, for instance, "Necessity has no law;" "We must make a virtue of necessity." Which means, that in certain circumstances crime should pass for virtue, and black for white; and, in order to justify this deception and falsehood, we try a *necessary lie*!

When any person, without himself possessing

any eminent and real merit, seeks to make himself appreciated by a display of words, or by the fame of certain actions, and thus monopolise public consideration, he, in his vanity and hypocrisy, expresses himself to this effect: "Prudence commands this of me. I deceive the world, because it must be deceived; it is, in fact, a necessary falsehood. As it is useful to me, it is therefore good."

Another, again, as yet but little infected by the corruption of the age, or at least still susceptible of virtuous principles, finds himself, perhaps by accident, in bad society. He there hears attacks made against the honour and name of known persons; the most shameful acts are attributed to them without any proof, and merely from the most simple appearances; and a pride is taken in repeating everything that is known by hearsay only. If, out of politeness, he joins in the busy slander—if he smiles assent to the indecent and improper remarks made, and those equivocal expressions at which virtue itself must blush—and if, amidst his licentious and debauched companions, he makes himself their associate in their excesses by a false point of honour, in order not to be railed and scoffed at as an image of virtue, he will say, in order to excuse the weakness of his character: "Prudence requires me to act thus.

I must howl with the wolves. I hate to do so, certainly ; it is contrary to my inclinations, but it is a necessary falsehood.”

It often happens, too, that a person whose conscience remains very delicate and susceptible as long as the matter at issue is the conduct to be reprehended in others, very readily excuses himself for the falsehood he himself practises in his dealings with men, in giving bad articles for good, and extorting extravagant interest for his money, with the plea: “Necessity has no law ; charity begins at home ; and these little tricks are allowed in trade.”

And, in conclusion, it frequently happens that a person, when he redoubles his flattery towards one whom he detests in his heart, until he has at length caught him within his net ; when he pours incense upon the injustice of those high in authority who abuse their power, by which means he confirms and strengthens them in their evil ; and when, from human weakness and fear, he refrains from doing honour to truth before his friends as well as his enemies, he says: “The great have commanding power ; I have no occasion to sacrifice myself. Why should I make myself enemies ? Necessity often obliges us to say many things we don’t mean.”

Thus, ordinarily, the men of our days endeavour

to excuse and palliate their infirmities ; thus Christians, even to the present time, deny Jesus, their Saviour, and yet hope for salvation. Then they overcrowd with their presence their various places of devotion, and calculate upon being saved by the merits and virtues of Him whom they daily crucify with their guilty passions and desires. They then continue to deceive themselves, as long as they can, sometimes with the pretext of the duties of a pretended wisdom, sometimes in creating a superstitious and sensual religion of their own imagination, sometimes in maintaining that the merits of the Redeemer alone can save man, without the necessity of any exertion himself towards his salvation, and sometimes in hoping to reach heaven through participating in the holy sacrament, or through long prayers. No, no, ye blind men, be not misled ; God is not to be treated with such mockery ! Christ has solemnly denounced your error, and your easy and accommodating religion, which consists in believing all that you wish to believe, and doing nothing which is contrary to your feelings, habits, and pusillanimity. He himself has declared, “ Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. vii. 20, 21.)



It is not, however, to be denied that cases occur in which even the honest may hesitate as to the course which it is most proper for them to take. Not only prudence sometimes forbids the rigorous performance of ordinary precepts, but, what is still more important, it may occur that a too great adherence to truth, in word and acts, becomes opposed to duties of a higher order.

There are certainly circumstances in which it would be more culpable to confess the truth than to conceal it. Who would not, in the case of a dangerously sick father, the support and only hope of his anxious family, seek to preserve his life by fresh assurances, rather than by the communication of the shame of one of his children, cut short at once the days of his existence? In everything we should use circumspection, and adopt a medium. There are certain *superior duties* to which we ought to make *inferior duties* subservient; and it is highly important to be able to distinguish between these two classes in the intercourse of life.

It does not require a profound knowledge of the world, rare wisdom, or extraordinary intelligence, to obviate a mistake with respect to the relative importance of these duties. No: Christianity is not a science of such difficult study. Jesus preached his doctrine to the most simple amongst the people, and he was understood by them. He did not

select learned and scientific men for his disciples, but men of low origin and mean education. And yet, they nevertheless became great and wise through his word, by that word which we still possess, to make us also wise and blessed.

There is no necessity either for long meditation or particular wisdom to enable us to distinguish between superior and inferior duties, or to know whether in certain cases it is better to avow or to conceal the truth. For, in life, when forced to act upon the spur of the moment, we cannot always find leisure to reflect at any length upon the choice of the course which it may be most advantageous to adopt. Who can even foresee if the consequences of an act may prove useful or injurious? And who, in every or any case, would receive what is expedient as the measure of virtue? Expediency in general, as well as the consequences of actions, are modified by a power superior to man. There are duties of a high order which, in a worldly point of view, instead of producing a benefit, hurl destruction upon us. There are certain duties which demand the sacrifice of our possessions, nay even of life itself; the recompense of virtue is in proportion to the efforts it costs us, and to the victory it makes us gain over our self-love.

Jesus Christ, whose precepts are applicable to the most wise as well as the most ignorant, requires

for their accomplishment neither sagacity, profound learning, nor great knowledge of the world, but only charity and love. *Love God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and thy neighbour as thyself.* Therein is the whole of the law. Every mortal is capable of love, even to the infant which hangs at its mother's bosom. It is the leading star, which conducts most surely to virtue and justice, and is equally agreeable both to God and man. He who, in his dealings, is guided by this law, cannot easily do wrong or injustice towards him with whom he deals.

*Love God with all thy heart and with all thy soul,* and you will then soon recognise the extent of your duties towards your neighbour and mankind generally. He who loves God will not, from his human infirmity and fear, commit the evil demanded of us by men. He who loves God, does not excuse crime, does not flatter vice, nor does he unite himself with the persecutors of virtue. He who loves God, if he cannot always prevent evil, does not, at least, encourage it by deed or word—by vile hypocrisy or vain politeness. He who loves God, listens to the voice of God within his own conscience, which is the infallible and immediate judge of what is good and what is bad. He who loves God is never forced to have recourse to falsehood: his heart tells him, it is just to obey

God rather than man. Honour the Father of truth by truth. If a solemn moment arrives when the confession of the truth involves the sacrifice of all you possess on earth, even your existence, never deny Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ also died for the truth he had brought with him for mortals from heaven; his disciples, animated by his spirit, died for the truth; and innumerable noble martyrs thought, acted, and died, like them, *for the truth*.

*Love thy neighbour as thyself.* And who is thy neighbour? Every man upon whom, and upon whose condition, you may exert an influence by your words or actions. If you love that brother as you ought, you love yourself in him. Therefore, what you wish others should do unto you, do you also unto them. Can you wish to be deceived by falsehood, even when done in a joke? No; but you will bless him, in return, who, in order to keep from you a greater evil, conceals from you a dangerous truth.

Yes, there are truths which, if communicated too abruptly, and at an ill time, may cause much injury. Examine well, on every occasion, not if an immediate and open confession of the truth will compromise your own interest, but if it will endanger the repose and welfare of others. Charity teaches you to speak where it is necessary, and to be silent where it is required.

Confess the truth, even to your own injury ; but charitably conceal it if it may interfere with the happiness of others. Conceal it if, without injury to others, you have promised and can preserve silence. Conceal it, if you feel that what you believe yourself is not altogether without some doubt, and if communicated might produce suspicions and inquietude in others, without carrying conviction to their mind. Conceal it, if you think the proper hour is not arrived in which the communication may prove beneficial. Everything has its time: and charity will teach you which is the salutary and proper moment.

Honour and respect, therefore, in others what may appear to them the truth, and which may render them honest and pious, although you may yourself perceive in it nothing but error and prejudice. If you live amongst a people who profess a religion different from your own, do not throw yourself amongst them, uncalled for, as a missionary of truth: refrain from shaking their faith with doubts. Every person is happy in his own faith only ; and, in proportion as his mind becomes enlightened, he will abandon his prejudices. Look less at what your neighbour believes than what he *does*. If his spirit is in accordance with that of Jesus Christ, he is a disciple of Jesus Christ. God will one day take into account the errors of the



heart alone—not the errors of the mind. But charity will show you how, with prudence and regard, you may dissipate the prejudices of your friend.

Thou eternal source of happiness, it is thy love which has given, O heavenly Father, an existence to the universe and to myself; Thou didst create me after thine own image. Thence is it that a soul impregnated with love and charity, and disposed to spread happiness around it, is what is most divine in man. Ah! if this celestial flame continued always to burn bright within my breast, it would soon consume the vile and earthly interest, and I should then seek happiness only in the universal felicity of my brethren. O sovereign Love and Charity, excite and keep alive within me this flame, so that it may become my whole existence and life! For, if I am penetrated with the spirit of Jesus, then only shall I breathe and exist in him; his will, will become my will, and his wisdom my wisdom—then only shall I know to esteem truth in word and action more than all earthly possessions, and even more than life itself; and only then shall I be enabled to comprehend the profound meaning of those sublime words: “To love Jesus Christ, and live in him, is better than all the science and knowledge of the world!”—  
AMEN.



## THE GIFTS OF FORTUNE.

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1 PETER, iv. 10.

“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

WHY has divine Providence distributed with such inequality the possessions of this earth? Why are the greatest riches often to be found in the hands of those who are the least worthy of them? Whence is it that the most virtuous families are often in want of the common necessities of life—that the philosopher and the man of genius frequently pine away their existence in obscure misery and distress; whilst those men most remarkable for their ignorance, stupidity, idleness, and inutility, are distinguished from all the others by the magnificence and splendour of their style of living, and the honourable and lucrative appointments they hold? Why does Heaven so often permit the good intentions of the friend of mankind to remain ineffectual because he wants the means to realise

them ; whilst, on the contrary, it is so prodigal of its most precious gifts towards the many of his fellow-creatures, who seek only delight in iniquity and evil-doing ? What a heaven might it not be upon this earth already, if virtue, piety, and wisdom, were united with the greatest possible happiness !

Such are the questions often asked by those who are forced to witness crime triumphant, and virtue overpowered and crushed into the dust. Such are the interrogations we still more frequently put to ourselves, when, in a fit of disappointment and despair, we compare our destiny, our fortune, and our whole position, with the situation and circumstances of those we fancy we surpass both in the good qualities of the heart, and in the superior attainments of the mind. Without intending it, we thus often complain of the wisdom of Providence, or often lament that we have not, like others, received a larger portion of its favours and benefits.

But has Providence really been so unjust in the distribution of its benefactions ? Which is the man upon this earth so eminently favoured by Heaven, and whose good fortune excites your envy ?

Recollect yourself ; examine attentively the works of Providence, as far at least as the eye of short-sighted man is able to survey the government of the world. The slightest observation will suffice

to convince you, that your murmurs and complaints are unjust and ill-placed—that your desires are not dictated by your better reason, but by your cupidity and sensuality; and a single moment of reflection and good faith, will be sufficient to reconcile you to the dispensations of Providence.

You murmur at the unequal distribution of the gifts of fortune—that is, you complain that you do not possess equal ease and comfort with others, whom you consider to be favoured with a better provision than yourself. But what causes you to murmur is not your pity for those of your fellow-creatures who are poorer than yourself, but it is envy which incites you to complain at beholding those richer than yourself. You yourself would not wish to abolish the existing differences of rank and condition, so favourable, when properly and justly regulated, for the improvement and perfection of the human race: neither would you desire even to live in a country where any majority, or perhaps the whole community, were your equals in talent, rank, and fortune; where none would require the aid of others; where all progress and advancement would be substituted by a monotonous uniformity; and where, finally, no person would express or feel an interest for you in particular, because the most complete and entire independence would be the general participation of all.

Thus your murmurs are only created by your own personal interest. In emulating a higher condition, you forget those who possess less fortune than yourself, although perhaps they are equally worthy, or even more worthy, of the favours of fortune. Is then the order and regulation of the world to be reversed, that your vanity and ambition may be satisfied? You must therefore admit that your pretensions are only the result of a haughty and unreasonable temerity, and your complaints the consequences of a mad selfishness; and were you to express them aloud, the world would mock at and despise you. Do you believe that the power of the Almighty will become the servant of your folly?

But, you again ask, Why are the gifts of fortune so frequently found in the possession of those who do not merit them? Which is the man, however, we again inquire, whom you judge to be unworthy of them? Is it he who knows not how to make a good use of them? But are you a competent judge over him you call unworthy? Are you sufficiently initiated in the secrets and mysteries of the economy of this world, to be enabled to know exactly the advantages and disadvantages resulting therefrom? Who will guarantee that millions of other men make a more noble use of their fortune than he



you condemn? You only point attention to him, because his honours, his power, and his riches dazzle and blind you; but you know not the conduct and management of those millions, because the sphere of their activity is too limited to attract your notice. Are you quite sure, that in a more elevated position of life you would retain the same principles and disposition which you now possess, and which, in your eyes, render you worthy of a more brilliant career? How many times have you not changed both your language and conduct, nay even your views and principles, in your present narrow sphere of action, according to the circumstances by which you were influenced? How often have you not resembled the disciple of Jesus, who swore, in the warmth and inspiration of his enthusiasm, to die rather than to deny his Divine Master, but who, in the hour of peril, denied him three times before the cock crowed? Judge not, and you shall not be judged! Do not condemn a man who, in other circumstances, with a different education, with other passions and other ideas, acts differently from yourself. If, instead of the mother that gave you birth, you had been born of a princess; if, instead of your present plain covering, you had purple robes—for your humble chair, you had a throne; and instead of sincere friends, you had courtiers and flatterers,

whose hypocrisy and heartlessness would flatter your pride, what would you be this day?

You ask, why does Providence leave the good intentions of the friend of mankind so often without the means to realise them, whilst it permits vice to possess a thousand resources? Are you certain that the family which to-day finds in its mediocrity a safeguard for its virtue and honour, would still remain virtuous and happy in the lap of wealth, and surrounded by all the seductions of a pleasurable life? Blind mortal, you deplore often the state which procures you real happiness, and wish to exchange it for one which accompanies brilliant misery! If on this earth vice really possesses great external means, the result therefrom is that by opposition and resistance virtue develops with greater energy the resources it is thus forced to seek in itself. What a mass of talent would have remained dormant and unknown if necessity had not awakened and brought it to light! What innumerable inventions and discoveries would still have to be made, had it not been for the spur of poverty and want!

Look around you, and behold what is the proportion of the various gifts of fortune, and say, have they been distributed in reality with the inequality you murmur at?

There is no disadvantage in the world which is

not compensated for by some advantage, nor any imperfection from which some good does not result. No country resembles the other in gifts of nature, but each has its peculiar charms and appropriate possessions. And as custom habituates us even to imperfections, it is, therefore, usual for every native to consider his own country superior to any other ; and as it is with the various countries of the earth, so it is with individual man.

Here we may behold a family living in opulence, but it is unhappy through the character or the fate of some of its members, and it envies the union and tranquillity which reign in the bosom of its neighbouring family, although in indigence and poverty. Yonder we see an individual who is to be pitied, because his limited understanding forces him to depend upon the advice of others ; but his fortune places him above want. We meet with another who lives in abundance ; but his bad state of health prevents him from enjoying any benefit from his fortune. Here we behold another, without property ; he possesses but limited means, yet his love of occupation and his industrious habits are the foundation of his peace of mind ; and he feels he has enough, whilst his labour protects and strengthens his health. There we encounter a man who has neither honours, appointments, nor income ; but his talents and his acquirements

place him above the vulgar crowd ; and he would not exchange his lot for all the gold of the most fortunate of his age.

Thus, Providence has not distributed its gifts of fortune with quite so much inequality as may appear at the first view. No person upon earth is the richest ; no person is the poorest ; each sees in others something to envy ; and each enjoys prerogatives which others do not possess. You have all received from God a particular mark of his favour. “ As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

Cease, therefore, to complain of the unequal division of the gifts of fortune. Regard not those who have in appearance a greater proportion of riches, rather than those who appear less favoured. Remember, that he whose condition you envy, perceives advantages in you, which, in return, excite his desires. He has more riches, but you have more strength ; you wish to possess his talents, and he envies your tranquillity of mind ; his honours and his glory would produce your happiness, whilst he would willingly exchange them for the happy obscurity which places you beyond his cares and persecutions. *No person is deprived of all advantages ; but all lack some.*

The longer and the more attentively we regard

the distribution of the gifts of fortune amongst men, the more we shall become convinced that this dispensation is the work of the wisdom and goodness of God ; and it will render us from day to day more satisfied with the portion allotted to ourselves. No mortal upon earth has cause to curse his own fate, unless he has made it wretched and insupportable by his own folly. For who, after all, and in reality, is the poorest man here below ? It is the discontented man ! Who is the richest and most independent man ? It is he that has the fewest wants !

In order to diminish the number of your wants, and in order to live satisfied with the gifts you have received from the hand of God, never forget this important truth : *The happiness of man is independent of the possessions of this earth* ; the happiest of mortals is not he who possesses the greatest riches, but he who possesses the greatest virtue.

If human happiness depended upon opulence, rank, and power, the poor mechanic would always remain the most unhappy, and the monarch the most happy of men. But how often do we, alas, experience the contrary ! How many eminent and glorious men have fallen victims to their cares and sorrows, whilst the obscure and low-born artisan has enjoyed in peace and tranquillity the fruits of his hard-earned labour.



You seek for happiness, and, blinded by your passions, you imagine you will find it in the enjoyment of brilliant and extensive possessions. These possessions, however, are the means, and not the foundation, of happiness ; besides, they will not contribute to your happiness, for thousands already who have that which you now sigh for, are not less unhappy than yourself. Seek not around you for what you can only find in the purity of your own heart, and in the wisdom which exalts you above all which is, and ever must remain, but dust and ashes.

In order to live contented with the lot which Providence has assigned to you, *learn to know the privileges of your position* : know how to appreciate your domestic and social relations, and tread not under foot the elements of happiness you possess, in order to run after an imaginary good. The dissatisfaction which calls forth your murmurs against Providence, is the consequence of worldliness which overwhelms your reason and your religious feelings ; it is the symptom of a diseased soul and of a disorganised mind. Cure yourself of this imbecility, and you will bless your lot when you compare it with that of so many millions of men who might envy your condition. Your situation, it is true, is not exempt from inconveniences ; but examine whether you have certainly

done all that depends upon yourself to escape from them, and whether, perhaps, you are not yourself the author and originator of them. If your sufferings are, in reality, the consequence of your faults and vices, why demand of God such astonishing things in favour of your inertness or infirmity? Become better, and your situation will also improve.

That you may live satisfied with the gifts which the bounty of Heaven has granted you, *ennoble all that you have in your possession, and you will be then rich!* Ennoble your heart by the virtues which you still need, and your mind by knowledge and meditation. Enlarge your possessions by activity, economy, and, above all, by the use you make of them; and substitute simplicity and purity for gaudy splendour and magnificence, and utility for a dazzling outward show. Ennoble the members of your family and of your household, by giving them an example of love, respect, and kindness; banish, gradually, from your conversation all littleness, and from your conduct all uncharitableness. Ennoble the relations which unite you with your equals and superiors; avoid bad company; conciliate the affection and benevolence of your contemporaries by accommodation and readiness to assist in all your dealings together; be the first to offer aid, and the last to require

it; and, finally, be rich in virtue, and you will acquire true riches, peace of soul, peace with God, contentment of the mind, favour with men, and a combination of all the blessings of Providence.

*The gifts of fortune are, however, always the gifts of God;* for God assigns to you means ample enough to enable you to make your own happiness, and to contribute to that of those around you. Cease, then, thou worm of the dust, to murmur and bewail at the infinite wisdom of God for not having regulated the government of the world according to your views! Can you venture to call in question the immensity of His love? Rather, confide entirely in that Providence which prepared for you even long before you existed.

Distribute with wisdom the rich portion which God has dispensed to you; neither be less faithful in the administration of the little He may have granted you. The day will arrive when you must give up your account; and the day of recompense will also come. The moment that shall accomplish your destiny will appear suddenly, and you will hear the voice of your divine Master say: "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (Mat. xxv. 23.)

Administer justly the gifts of fortune, in preserving and defending them from all abuse and injury. Beware you do not ruin your health in the dissipations of a voluptuous and effeminate life; dissipate not your fortune in idle and extravagant lavishment; nor destroy your intellectual powers by occupations unworthy of an immortal spirit. Do not sacrifice your situation, your credit, or your influence, to the gratification of your vanity. Regard, rather, each of the gifts you have received as a talent confided to your charge, with which you are to act in the most profitable way for the happiness of your family, and the benefit of society and of the world generally.

Source of all grace, and Author of all perfect gifts, God of goodness, infinite Being, and wise Dispenser of our destiny, and Father of all worlds and nations, O my Father! Thou hast not forgotten one of thy creatures; each has received the means to create his own happiness and that of others. The gifts Thou hast distributed amongst thy children are numerous and varied; but this very variety itself is a bond which unites nation to nation and man to man. The necessity of satisfying reciprocally their wants, approximates mankind by an interchange of good and friendly services. What one may lack is possessed by another, and the resources of one man supply the deficiencies of

another. None possess everything ; none are perfect ; and none are independent of others. By this mutual need of services and assistance is produced the welfare of all.

Content, O Lord, with all that Thou hast granted to my family and myself, I will avoid all misuse of thy bounty, and I will not neglect the wants and happiness of others. Of what service is to us the possession of an abundance of worldly wealth, if we use it not with wisdom and prudence ! And even with little we may be rich ; but with Thee, O heavenly Father, in our heart, we possess a treasure which can never perish.—AMEN.







## MARRIAGE.

ST. MATTHEW, XIX. 4—6.

“And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife : and they twain shall be one flesh ? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

OF all the ties which unite individuals upon this earth, there exists not one more sacred, nor more important in its nature and results, than marriage.

It is the most sacred, because it is ordained by the Creator himself. The most ancient record of the history of the human race describes to us the creation of man and woman, and their union together by the hand of Jehovah. “And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone ; I will make him an help for him” (Genesis, ii. 18). God has implanted in the heart of mankind an intense desire for this union. Each sex respects in the other the excellencies not found in its own ; the magical delicacy and tenderness of the woman

meliorate and modify the impetuosity of pride which man derives from the consciousness of his strength and power; and the courage and energy of the man protect and shield the weakness of his companion. Mutually attracted by the impulses of nature, the youth and the virgin approach each other, and in the innocence of their unsophisticated hearts, the reciprocal affection they experience becomes in a measure a foretaste of a divine and holy love. Every nation upon the earth celebrates with reverence the institution of marriage; and in the eyes of all marriage is held sacred and its rights inviolable.

This union, *one of vast importance in itself*, is the most intimate which can be formed by man. The married only can convert their happiness into mutual felicity: nature unites them by an indissoluble bond of friendship. The destiny which hangs over one, inevitably includes the other in its influence; and they share alike in all things, happiness and misfortune, joy and sorrow, glory and dishonour, riches and poverty. They belong to each other, and remain together when they are abandoned by every one else. They pursue together their career in life; and the ties which bind them in this world to each other can only be cut asunder by death. The delicate and tender chain which unites brother to sister,

and the parent to the child, is much less powerful and lasting than the holy union of the husband and the wife. The young man leaves his paternal roof, and is thrown amidst the tumult and bustle of the world. He becomes adult, and the parental injunctions have ceased, and his only comfort and support then is the wife his heart has chosen; she alone belongs to him; it is for her he cares, toils, and lives. The woman also has left her father and her mother, that she may follow her husband; in him she finds her parents more than replaced; to him she clings; from his hand she receives her dole of happiness or misery; and to him also is she the reward or the punishment.

The conjugal union is perhaps more important than any other in its *consequences*. It is, for the majority of mankind, a source of the greatest felicity, or of the greatest suffering. Man, fully matured, separated from the friends of his youth, and quitting the happy circle of his family, raises with his own hands the edifice of his domestic happiness. Even if the storm of adversity rage around him, he can always find true comfort in the conjugal peace of his home: whereas, domestic discord renders him miserable and wretched, even in the midst of honours and distinctions, in the very height of glory and riches.

With marriage man enters upon a new existence ; he is no longer alone in the world ; tender but permanent bonds attach him to life ; his heart becomes acquainted with paternal joys—the most pure and cherished, as well as paternal pains—the most severe and acute ; and to him the present moment has now become more precious, the past more instructive, and the future more attractive.

The greater the respect we owe to a law which renders fruitful and civilises the human species, the greater is the interest we ought to attach to an institution which is the source of civil and domestic happiness or misery, and the more criminal is he who makes the sanctity of marriage the object of his ridicule : for in railing against a divine institution, he mocks at the Creator, and treats with derision the noblest law of nature, and that best adapted to the well-being of humanity.

The importance of marriage, the necessity of this ordinance, established for the propagation of the human species, for the stability of states, and for the happiness of individuals, is however injured and destroyed by luxury and the love of display, which diminish the number of marriages, sever from each other souls united by nature, and encourage that disorder which is contrary to morality and religion. But simplicity of manners promotes happiness in wedded life, and strengthens

the union of those whom similarity of mind and tastes had united in the desire to form for each other a terrestrial paradise.

Extravagant expenditure, which it is but too often customary to believe a necessity, especially in large towns; the comforts and pleasures which man will not deny to himself; and the enjoyments and delights produced by fashion and dress, into which in early life the female is initiated, and to which she becomes habituated, are serious and powerful impediments to marriage. In spite of his natural desire and most honest intentions, a man ought not to venture to marry if his limited means will not suffice to provide for the wants of two persons, nor meet the double expense to the extent demanded by their condition in society.

Such are the dangerous and sad effects of luxury, and this it is which, above all things, poisons domestic tranquillity, and ruins the happiness of young people, united by their purity as well as by their sympathy. It reverses the sacred order of nature, opposes its most tender desires, and transforms into a regret the most innocent wish that sensible beings can indulge in—the wish to be happy. It separates man from man; it leads him to egotism which worships *self* only, which disregards and disdains all else; it dissolves all ties of



connection and union among the people, destroys all respect for the laws, attachment to the sovereign, and enervates the human species.

Whether considered as a true cause of death to all conjugal felicity, or as one of the greatest and most serious obstacles to those legitimate unions to which nature holds out the promise of happiness, luxury appears destined to be the curse of all ages, and to incur the malediction of men in every civilised country, and certainly the hatred of all the worshippers of Christ. For how could a Christian venture to defend, how could he venture to tolerate, a principle which is inimical to the order of nature and to the institutions of the Creator?

If luxury opposes to marriage those obstacles which it is difficult or impossible to overcome, the levity of many persons does not less contravene the wise decrees of Providence; it but too frequently poisons the sources of worldly happiness, howsoever pure, and transforms them into a perpetual fountain of bitterness. Luxury destroys all respect for marriage; whilst levity treats with scorn and contempt the *importance* of this sacred compact. Levity itself is, generally, the fruit of deep corruption; it regards as the end of marriage that which is merely accessory, and converts that which is only accessory into a principal object.

The aim of marriage is not alone the propaga-

tion of the human species, but the happiness of the married and their moral perfection, as the result of their mutual love. But how could they secure reciprocal happiness if their character and sentiments did not dispose them to live for each other, to have but one soul, to correct and sacrifice the errors and pretensions which might interrupt their mutual harmony? When, therefore, we are about to conclude this important and solemn contract, we ought to consider less the qualities which render persons respectable, than the faults which might cause us to despise them, and especially when, having been contracted during the period of education, and strengthened by habit, they have become a second nature.

The evils which too often attend conjugal unions, never proceed from the tenderness and generosity of the married couple, but invariably from their inveterate and incorrigible faults. Before marrying, therefore, it is most important to study the faults which have become habitual, rather than the virtues possessed by the individual, if we would foresee the results of the union we are entering upon. Experience presents to us many happy marriages, where there is an absence of any eminent qualities; the husband and wife pass together happy and peaceful days, because

their daily and affectionate intercourse is not interrupted by each other's faults. Whereas, we often behold discord and passion existing between married couples, whose virtues and characters appeared to promise a felicity but rarely to be found ; because, in conjunction with their distinguished qualities, they retain all those faults, infirmities, and peculiarities, which are concealed from public observation, only to become more intolerable and conspicuous within the limited circle of domestic life, and in the hourly communication of husband and wife.

Often, in the first illusions of love, persons carried away by their fondness for each other, become reciprocally blinded to their faults, and behold, in the beloved object, virtue and perfection only. Often, again, it is from the want of knowing each other sufficiently that they are prevented from discovering to one another such dangerous infirmities ; and still more often it arises from a reluctance and unwillingness to risk their being detected and discovered. With what care do we not seek to make ourselves appear amiable when we wish to be beloved ! How ingenious does not love make us in veiling our imperfections and in disguising our infirmities !

But as long as love is less a tender affection

than a wild and impetuous passion, so long is it a mere madness ; for, whilst it is the heart which judges, its decisions are both fatal and blind. Woe to those unfortunate persons who suppress the voice of reason, and who, deaf to its warnings, rush with the impetuosity of madness to the desired object, admiring its good qualities, and concealing from themselves its faults. Love, which is moderated by affection, may endure for an age ; but passion lives only for a moment, and ceases as soon as it has obtained its aim. Love also finds its term, and gives place to disgust and hatred, when it eventually perceives its error in the object of its choice. Our eyes were, at first, only enchained with the perfections of the person we loved ; and the sad discovery of faults is reserved for the moment when we have formed the tie which cannot be dissolved.

Passion is divested of judgment, and is always inconsiderate, and consequently blameable : it endangers, with precipitate levity, the tranquillity of the soul and the happiness of our whole life. All levity is culpable at this important epoch, which demands the most serious reflection, inasmuch as it decides the temporal happiness or misery of two individuals. Check the fervour of your senses by that always efficacious remedy—

time. Never contract an alliance without well knowing into whose hands you are about to confide your felicity. Let your eye be more penetrating, I repeat, in detecting the errors than in discovering the good qualities of the person with whom you contemplate an union; the latter are less the foundation of happiness than the former its destruction. The summit of wisdom consists in never uniting yourself to a person by eternal ties, until you have acquired *the conviction, that through and with that person, no other, in your place, could be unhappy.*

But the blind passions of youth are not the most frequent cause of the evils of conjugal union. More often still, secondary considerations operate upon parents and friends to unite together, by the heavy chains of dulness and misery, two individuals who, in a different relationship, might have become, and have been regarded, as the most happy of human beings: all which results from the criminal abuse of legitimate authority! And how often do baser motives force such an alliance between persons unknown, or, at least, strangers to each other; persons who are separated from each other by cool indifference, or even by aversion!

In general, parents only take care to procure for their child a suitable maintenance, agreeable



to its habits, taste, and condition in society. But they rarely examine if the character and disposition of those they have resolved to unite to each other are of such a nature as to ensure internal peace and happiness, as well as the physical welfare which circumstances already guarantee.

Assuredly, reason cannot possibly sanction or approve a marriage being concluded, when it is foreseen already that the husband will be incapable of maintaining honourably his wife and children by the fruits of his labour; but, on the other hand, reason cannot sanction or approve of the peace and serenity of two persons being sacrificed to the avaricious calculations of interest. Alas! how numerous are the examples which exist of the mournful results of these marriages, so well, and yet, at the same time, so badly calculated! What vexation and care do they produce to those who, with fatal hand, impose such a yoke; and what tears and lamentations to those who are forced to bear it!

Sometimes this sad and grievous error of parents seems to seek and find its excuse in their vigilant foresight, however imprudent it may be. But who can undertake to excuse those whose family pride causes them to reject alliances well adapted to found the happiness of their children, whilst they force them to contract those from which disgust,

aversion, hatred, and wasting sorrow, must be the natural consequences? Who would venture to defend the father, who is sufficiently denaturalised to sacrifice the moral welfare and condition of his child to his personal interest, his external consideration and aggrandisement, and his favourite tastes; who is criminal enough to plunge his son or daughter into interminable misery, rather than renounce his ambitious designs? But God judges those that act so; and the world itself stamps upon them the seal of scorn and contempt. Yes; God judges you, all ye that by a vile selfishness trample underfoot His institutions, and destroy the sacred and admirable plans conceived for the happiness of His children! God judges you: God is the recom-penser, who counts the tears, and hears the sighs, which your egotism draws from your victim, who was formed and intended for a better destiny! You obtain the object of your cruel designs; but you cannot escape from a terrible repentance. It will reach you, even if it be upon your death-bed, when your conscience will present to you, as a threatening vision, the scene of that misery of which you are the author—the deplorable inheritance which you leave behind for your unhappy family!

The line of demarcation between the use and abuse of parental authority is nowhere so difficult to be traced as in the choice of a husband or wife

for a daughter or son. How easy it is, notwithstanding the most scrupulous circumspection, to overstep the limits of this authority. How culpable do those make themselves who go beyond those limits through levity, obstinacy, pride, and interest, in contempt of the divine institutions, and in contempt of the happiness of those beings confided to their solicitude!

When freed from the guardianship of their parents, children find themselves placed in the most critical position of life; *the parents have the right to give them advice, but not commands.* They are no longer the masters nor the instructors of those whom they acknowledge capable of commanding others in their turn, and of educating their children. They ought never to forget that upon this selection of a husband or wife depends not only their own happiness but the happiness of their children. If from any motives of consideration they force a child to contract a union at which its heart revolts, their conduct is imprudent, cruel, and contrary to the spirit of the Holy Scriptures.

But however this principle which establishes the legal enfranchisement of children may be just, yet, on the other hand, equally well-founded and legitimate is the right of parents to refuse their consent to a union contemplated by the blind

passions of their children, and which will be necessarily attended by misery and shame. When Christian parents oppose their authority against such a mad and unhappy choice, they avail themselves not merely of a right, but they perform a duty. In general, a choice of this nature is made at an age when the force of passion distorts the imagination of the youthful mind, which it drags into unknown peril, and which is not secured by a knowledge of mankind, or experience of the world. In such a case, the experienced prudence and ripened wisdom of the parents, and the calm reflection of their more advanced age, should guide the inexperience of youth, and moderate its fire; their advice, and the authority of persuasion, may at least prevent the temporal happiness of their children from being destroyed in its germ by inconsiderate and delirious passion.

Thus, the peace and serenity of life depend entirely upon the wise choice of a husband or a wife. And yet, with what imprudent levity and frivolity do so many, nevertheless, take this step which decides their future fate! What a source of bitter lamentation would be checked, when not destroyed, if we selected with greater prudence the companion of our earthly pilgrimage! What sorrows daily renewed, and what secret regrets, wasting and destroying the body as well as the

soul, would be spared ; and from how many resolutions, suggested and produced by despair, should we be preserved !

If we cast our eyes around us, how rarely do we find those happy marriages to exist of which we might be enabled to say : Behold a heaven upon earth, behold mortals worthy to be envied, elevated above the strokes of fate by their love and by their constant fidelity ! Separated even from the world and all its pleasures, they would, nevertheless, be truly rich and happy in themselves ! On the contrary, how many marriages do we witness where nothing exists but disgust and indifference ? There the days pass but rarely without a cloud ; there, with each coming day, they wish in vain for a better fate ; and the discord of the parents destroys the happiness of the children who witness it, or incites them to the imitation of this injurious and baneful example.

But where shall we seek for the source of this misery so universal ? Why are so few men happy, when they might and ought to find their greatest source of happiness in domestic life ? Why do we find, in so many families, an internal and secret enemy which gnaws at their welfare, but which, as they cannot banish, they conceal within themselves in order not to add public shame to their private torments ? The principal cause of this



unhappy state of things is to be traced to the bad and imprudent choice made, which has rendered marriage the misery of an entire life, instead of that continual happiness which ought to be the fruits of a wise and intimate union. Too often, in the intoxication of their passion, lovers become eternally united before they have allowed themselves time to become mutually acquainted with each other's faults ; but reason succeeds to this passion ; and passion, with its rash dreams and illusions, is followed by sober reflection. Those who, anxious and jealous to please, had previously presented themselves only in a favourable point of view, behold themselves now continually together, and exposed to the discovery of each other's infirmities. Thus many hopes become deceived ; many errors become more and more visible ; and many bad customs and habits resume their sway. The qualities by which we are enabled to shine in the world are, very often, perfectly useless in the less dissipated and more regular course of domestic life. We think, then, that we have been deceived by cunning, whilst, in fact, we have only been so by our own passion, and were willingly duped. Thence arise all the reproaches made continually the one against the other ; and thence proceed those demands upon each other which are never satisfied. Peace, alas ! is banished, and nothing

more is left to the married couple but obstinacy, contradiction, vexation, and repentance !

A marriage attended with discord is the most painful union presented in social life. All other connections are easy to be dissolved ; but the ties of marriage are not broken without difficulty. Converted into chains of iron, they keep us bound to our enemy until the compassionate hand of death cuts them asunder. Each day which dawns upon the unhappy couple re-awakens the dread of some fresh misery ; they avoid each other to seek elsewhere a moment of pleasure, and only meet again to discover some new cause for vexation : where there is no peace there can be no blessing !

But it is not always vices and culpable inclinations which interrupt conjugal happiness ; it is often only trivial errors and offensive peculiarities which, however, the eye of the stranger scarcely perceives. But, howsoever trifling may be these frivolous points in our manners and disposition, they may, nevertheless, banish from the limited circle of our married life all the happiness we desire.

If the peace of home, and of the heart, are a necessity and a treasure, let your first efforts be devoted to the correction of your faults, and the true source of discord and indifference, the greatest obstacle to all sincere conciliation. Let not the

husband and wife demand of each other the virtues of which they do not themselves set the example. Let them not feel angry at each other's faults before they have corrected their own, which wound a heart chosen to partake mutual joys and sorrows. If you are not loved, you must attribute the cause to yourself rather than to the person whose heart is turned against you, because you have omitted to render yourself amiable in his or her eyes, or at least you have not endeavoured to continue to be so.

The continuance of domestic happiness is based upon one fundamental law—that the married pair, veiling with silence the secrets of their home before the eyes of all the world, without even excepting their most intimate friends, behave towards each other with the greatest sincerity and the most perfect freedom in all their relations—whether as husband and wife, whether as father, as mother, or as inseparable friends. The husband should read the heart of the wife, and the wife should equally know the feelings of the husband; thus they will have but *one* soul, *one* love, *one* fear, *one* hope, and *one* life in two bodies.

Distrust has too often destroyed the most happy union; frequently the domestic felicity of persons, estimable in other respects, has been ruined by a fatal secret on the part of the husband or wife, by

the misconceptions it has occasioned, and by the want of sincere mutual explanations. To keep a secret from the person who accompanies us on our pilgrimage through life, is not only to interrupt domestic peace, but to open the door of our home to every evil, and to furnish a cause for the most poignant miseries. Every mystery of this nature gives free latitude to evil report and mischievous construction; false friends slide in between the hearts already separated by such a secret; and crafty villains, perhaps, may even undermine conjugal purity, and infidelity make derision of oaths.

There is but one remedy for this malady of soul, which is that charity which thou, O Jesus, Divine Instructor of the world, hast given unto us. Charity alone gives esteem, confidence, benevolence, and peace; charity alone supports the evils of others, and seeks occasion to correct with tenderness, and without humbling in his own eyes or in the presence of strangers, him whom these evils dishonour. Charity and religion convert the union of marriage into a celestial alliance. Those who have partaken of the same destiny during life, will one day sleep with the same hopes in the arms of death. The same eternity opens before them; and the same sentiments elevate their hearts towards the Father of the

universe. There, where Thy love, O Jesus, penetrates and refreshes the soul, there dwells a felicity without interruption ; there, nothing can change the peace and happiness of the nuptial state ; and there, finally, the tenderness of mothers and the virtue of fathers pass as an inheritance of blessing to happy posterity.—AMEN.







## THE PASSION FOR READING.

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2 TIMOTHY, iii. 16, 17.

“ All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

GROWTH in knowledge, like all other things, has its peculiar risks and dangers, inasmuch as it must be promoted by the perusal of many works of a different character. In those times, when no other books existed but those written and copied again with much labour by the hand, only a few distinguished men ventured to write down their thoughts and openly disseminate them. Although even then there was no want of mischievous and even dangerous works—for when has any art existed which has not been abused by man?—still, writings that were worthless and bore no character, could not hope to enjoy a long existence, because it was not worth the trouble to increase their number by transcription.

In the present day, however, it is very different.

By means of the press, the worst as well as the best productions may be thrown upon the world by thousands, and tens of thousands of copies, with the most marvellous rapidity. Bad works are now more easily circulated, and more universally read, than was the case formerly. The number is in proportion to that of mediocre, semi-philosophic minds, and those of mean and ignoble ideas, compared with those really great minds, whose true mission is to instruct their fellow-creatures, and whose only object is their benefit. Hence the overwhelming number of works, all bearing the stamp of miserable mediocrity, all calculated to spread the contagion of their authors' errors and infirmities. Rarely can we find, in the books of the present day, the stamp of merit and seal of immortality; that is—force, truth, elevation of mind, a plenitude and profundity of knowledge, a reflection of the outer and inner world, or any ray of that divine light which, whether passing through the medium of fact or fiction, enlightens the path of perfection, or warms the heart. These are the qualities which evidence the real inspiration of a work and the nobleness of its aim. And therefore, even at the present day, we may distinguish the best works by the same characteristics mentioned by St. Paul to Timothy, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for

doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.)

The evil is augmented by the existence of so few persons whose reading is regulated by any plan selected with judgment, or attended with any advantage. They receive the bad equally with the good, read without examination, and lay aside the book without asking themselves or ascertaining what they may have gained by the trouble of reading, either in heart or soul, in thought or feeling. But to thousands of readers, the perusal of a book, far from being an exercise, is a mere pastime, amusement, or mental excitement, especially when the most elevated aim is only to please the imagination. As children lay aside all useful occupation for the sake of listening to marvellous stories which enchant their imagination, so, many persons, neglecting serious pursuits, indulge a weak childish passion for reading. This evil, unknown in the time of Jesus and his disciples, is become, in the present day, one of the most common in both large and small towns ; and investigation would discover to us, that it is but too frequently the source of the corruption of manners, and of the want of religion and energy.

The passion for reading is an immoderate desire

for the temporary amusement of an inactive mind with the conceptions and inventions of writers. We read merely for the sake of reading, and not to enrich our mind with knowledge ; we read indiscriminately both the false and the true, impelled by a curiosity that bears no resemblance to thirst for knowledge. We read and forget ; we are pleased with this idle occupation, and give ourselves up to it, as to an agreeable reverie.

The mere reading, without any serious desire to gain instruction or improvement, is in fact *idleness of mind*. For as long as the mind is satisfied with a succession of ideas which are foreign to it, it remains quite passive ; and if it makes no attempt to retain these ideas, the whole will only have the effect of a dream. Most precious time is wasted ; but this, however, is not the least of the injuries sustained from this over-reading. The listlessness and inactivity of the mind, and the desire of letting others think for us, become habitually necessary, and relax the powers of the soul.

This result is evinced in various ways, according to the disposition of the individual. Such, for instance, as possess a retentive memory, accumulate in their mind, by mere dint of reading, a multitude of facts, useful or not, without the least exercise of their powers of thought. The fruit of such reading affords no nutriment to the soul,

but remains a useless enfeebling burden, like the undigested food in the stomach of a voracious eater. A truth that has been discovered by ourselves is more precious than a thousand truths received from others, and remains more fixedly imprinted upon the memory. A single shilling earned by our own labour, and put to use, has more real value than an ingot of gold in the coffers of a miser.

Many are endowed by nature with a lively imagination, which, by continual reading, they excite to a monstrous degree, neglecting all the other faculties. The amusement of their imagination is their only object and desire, and what does not produce that, is to them dry, tedious, and repugnant. Soon they become disgusted with useful and solid information, the acquisition of which requires the exercise of thought and judgment. They desire only the stimulating enjoyments of the imagination, and find therein alone their happiness and chief good. They cull from the field of human knowledge only such things as contribute to this object, which require no trouble to collect, and are sure to excite and gratify their curiosity. Upon this is grounded a pretension to sound and general information, but which in reality is hollow and superficial—a treacherous flame, which blazes, but gives neither light nor



warmth. Hence that vain conceit which decides and judges without acquaintance with the subject—an infallible sign of weakness of mind and self-satisfied ignorance. Hence disgust for all useful works and grave occupations, which claim the application of powers widely different from mere witticisms and the reveries of a poetical imagination. But such powers are wanting in those of whom we speak; for amidst idle reading the faculties of the mind remain unexercised, and become stupified and deadened. Persons of this description too soon betray in all their actions their incapability and inaptitude for the more serious avocations and professions of life, and they then lament and complain that they are not enough known! whilst the very cause of their being held in such low estimation is, that they are too well known.

*How many people, ruined by this passion for reading, find themselves eventually unfitted for their station of life, and quite incapable of fulfilling its duties!* Here, we find men without energy to ameliorate their condition, longing to escape from the sphere which they pretend is too limited for their powers of action; and yonder, we meet with females, who find in the joys, pains, and cares of the marriage state and domestic life, nothing which realises their exaggerated ideas and thoughts

—no food for their imagination and sensibility; they have learnt everything except what a woman ought to know in order to properly appreciate her situation, to attend to her household duties, devote all possible care to the comforts of her husband and the education of her family, and render home happy.

Amongst the writers of the present day, who seek to captivate the imagination and produce pleasant emotions, there are very few that possess sufficient experience of the world, and are sufficiently acquainted with the connection between the circumstances of life and the human heart. As the greatest part of them have only formed their minds by various readings, without making any selection, and have only nourished their imagination with visions, so also their writings present only the melancholy results of a heated fancy and an impoverished understanding. They neither paint the world as it is, nor as it ought to be, for they know it not; but they compose a tissue of fiction contrary to nature, common sense, and useful morality. They seek to attract and please by the novelty of their ideas and representations, and bring into action fantastic spirits and beings; but they know not how to call forth the powers of the human soul. Thus they do no more than reproduce, under another form, what they had borrowed from a variety of books.

The most pernicious influence of such a passion for reading *is seen in its effects upon young persons*, partly because their inexperienced hearts are more susceptible of impressions of every sort, and partly because the imagination is with them the most active faculty. If some unfortunate circumstance, whether through negligence in the education, or inattention of the parents, causes a book of a corrupting nature, dictated by a vicious taste, to fall into their hands; and if, accordingly, their imagination becomes familiarised with improper subjects, with scenes in seducing colours, and in which vice is in a manner idealised, who can save their hearts when exposed to such subtle poison? Behold the secret principle—but too rarely held up to condemnation—of the precocious maturity of youth, of its knowledge of the vices of licentiousness and debauchery, and of the corruption of the juvenile heart, under the semblance of morality! Behold the causes of the decay of the intellectual and physical powers of so many young people, the victims of their secret vices! All that the persevering love of the mother, the vigilant care of the father, and the zeal of the tutor, have endeavoured to form and maintain during years of anxiety, may be destroyed in a few hours by a single immoral book!

But how can I possibly enumerate all the evils,

vices, and infirmities, which have their source, or find their nourishment, in the passion for reading! And if some are preserved from its effects by favourable circumstances which may opportunely intervene, and others wean themselves from it; and if others again suffer not from its injurious consequences, can it be denied that thousands of victims owe to this passion the ruin both of their spiritual and worldly hopes?

How then, will be asked, is this evil to be remedied? The authorities of government can do much, no doubt, when they apply themselves seriously to the prevention of the sale and circulation of works evidently immoral; but a great number of corruptible writings, nevertheless, escape their vigilance. Parents and instructors may also effect much, when they keep a not less watchful eye upon the studies than upon the play-mates of the juvenile classes.

Bad society corrupts good manners; but the most dangerous society is that of a book containing ideas not at all adapted to the mind of the reader, or which, by the charm of its style, renders the errors of the writer more completely seductive, and undermines the principles of rectitude, morality, modesty, and religious faith. Parents and instructors may certainly do much more still, in forming the heart and mind of youth, in shielding

their virtue with religion, in producing within them a natural aversion for all that is ignoble and vulgar, or in placing in their hands the best and most appropriate works adapted to their age and their situation ; so that, finally, the mere idea of sin and vice will inspire them with disgust. But, despite of all these means, they are but weak auxiliaries, if he whom we are anxious to preserve from the dangers of reading as described, does not himself cherish the sacred and firm wish of avoiding them. Can we save him, who, without exercising proper courage and resolution, allows himself to be dragged to his own destruction ?

If you are convinced that the passion for indiscriminate reading has its dangers, or, at least, its injurious effects upon the heart and mind, then, as a Christian, summon up all your strength and form an inviolable resolution *to abstain from this over-reading*. Our ancestors were a race much more vigorous and powerful, because they read less and performed more ; they preferred thinking for themselves to following the ideas of those whose examples were both false and erroneous.

Read little, or, at any rate, *read not without making your selection*. Too great a variety, instead of recruiting the mind, only confuses it. The impression of the preceding subject is often destroyed by the next in succession. Select that



which is the most useful and best adapted for your station and social career in life ; concentrate all your powers for this purpose, instead of diverting your thoughts with divers other unsuitable readings. Consult with some friend upon the selection to be made, and who is acquainted with the best works upon the subject to which you ought to devote your thoughts.

Read little, *but with attention, reflection, and meditation*, so that the subject may be indelibly impressed upon your memory. Lay down the book often whilst perusing it, and consider well its contents. Weigh well the principles it conveys, and do not rest until you have acquired an exact knowledge and conviction of the truth, utility, and excellence of the points it treats upon ; the basis of this knowledge and conviction you must seek within yourself.

Seldom read *for the mere pleasure of reading*. This pleasure is never more pure and lively than when reading enlightens the mind, expands and stores the soul with generous and charitable thoughts. Therefore, we ought not to peruse the poetical creations of the imagination solely for the enjoyment it produces as an art, but to acquire noble and elevated sentiments, to study the human heart, its grandeur and its infirmities. Works of this nature, more than any others,

require very serious attention, in order that we may not be led into a labyrinth of error in following the high and flowery path of romantic poetry. Works, again, of an indifferent and mediocre character, eventually spoil and destroy the taste ; whilst those productions which embellish by the charm of talent the most ignoble subjects, tend to inflame the passions, to palliate and justify vice, or at least to decorate it with the flowers under which too often lies concealed the poisonous reptile. Abstain, therefore, from the perusal of writings composed for the pleasure of the imagination, unless recommended by a faithful, experienced, and virtuous friend.

To love Christ and his wisdom is far better than all human knowledge. Of what use or benefit is it to me to know the world and all things created in it, if I neglect the knowledge of my duties and of heavenly things? Whenever I read either sacred or profane works, it shall ever be with the object of perfecting my spirit and approaching nearer to Thee, O Soul of Souls, Eternal Wisdom ! Direct my judgment, O God ! sanctify my desires, that I may avoid the dangers which present themselves in the difficult path of life, even to those who most earnestly seek Thy guidance and protection.—AMEN.



## THE POWER OF TRUTH.

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JOHN, iii. 19—21.

“ And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God.”

JESUS CHRIST, the Son of God, speaking to one of the leaders of the Jews, who had come to him in the night in order to learn the truth from his lips, pronounced, with a deep sense and meaning, the words contained in the above text. These words convey a beautiful and touching maxim; and it is most frequently the only one which consoles the noble and generous, who are witnesses of the corruption of manners and decline of faith.

This beautiful and almost only consolation consists in the thought that, after the perpetration of so many deeds of darkness, a day will arrive the light of which shall unveil all the mysteries of

iniquity, and expose them in all their turpitude and deformity: that, in the end, truth shall triumph over falsehood; that it shall unmask the proud hypocrite, cover with ignominy the usurer pretending to devotion, silence the sarcasms and sneers of the enemy to religion, and humble the pride of the vain and ambitious Pharisee. The audacity of the unpunished adulterer shall be shaken, the heart of the libertine subdued, the tears of outraged innocence and virtue avenged; the cheat, become rich with ill-gotten wealth, shall be exposed to public shame; the liar and calumniator shall be struck dumb; and, finally, the perfidious betrayer of his fellow-mortals shall be abandoned to the malediction of the whole world.

It is a beautiful and almost the only consolation of good and magnanimous souls, to know that truth must eventually prevail; that it will exalt that virtue which has been but too long despised, and elevate that justice which has hitherto been trodden under foot. And have they not need of such consolation, when they contemplate the melancholy scene presented to their view? In what character does not the whole world present itself before their eyes, when they behold that there is nothing sacred, either in heaven or upon earth, which is not desecrated by senseless vanity, and profaned by egotism, that contemner of humanity and worshipper

of self; when they see millions of Christians making a mockery and derision of their brethren in Jesus Christ, and expressing shame and disgust at religion, as if it were only a childish dream and delusion? Do they not require such a consoling prospect when they perceive an innumerable multitude of individuals, neglected by their various rulers and the instructors of youth, stagnating in revolting superstition and in complete and profound ignorance, without any consciousness of their own dignity, without the least idea of the Almighty, or any enlightened knowledge of their immortal destiny? Do they not require such consolation when they behold the servants of the altar, the successors of the apostles, the ministers of Jesus Christ, who, alas! do sometimes not believe what they themselves teach, but regard their sacred calling as a convenient means of living, and confirm the people in the errors at which they mock, by themselves passing their days in luxury, pleasure, and comfort? When, under the designation of successors to Jesus Christ, they behold them preach the doctrine of continence while living in debauchery, recommend charity while cherishing and practising hatred and revenge, and condemn pride whilst, as has formerly been the case, they themselves, inflamed with the desire of ruling, persecute and cast into chains whoever possesses the courage to publish their corruption?



It is a beautiful and frequently the only consolation of the good and magnanimous, to know that, at length, a day will come when truth, as the almighty avenger of its enemies, will stand forward, and condemn to the scorn of the world and posterity, the tyrannical oppressors of nations, and their instruments and ministers, often more culpable than themselves; and the servile flatterers of power, who will fawn and cringe to-day before him they lately treated with contempt, and tread under feet their benefactor who, in the summit of power yesterday, is abandoned by fortune to-day, and thrown to the dust. It is consoling to know, also, that it will equally punish the bloodsuckers of the people, who, that themselves may live in abundance and luxury, consume the whole substance of the land; the judges who, by their venality, are rather sellers than ministers of justice; and faithless magistrates, ever ready to ill-treat those whom they cannot plunder. A day of judgment is reserved for all these despicable mortals, these Christians without religion, these worshippers of their own interest—the only God they know! “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world.”

It is at length arrived. In vain the vicious flatter themselves that their unworthiness will remain concealed: the veil is removed; and what

they really *are* is compared with what they were *believed* to be. You hope in vain to conceal what you *have* done, and what you *ought* to have done; the secret of your artifices is known; and they can no longer be shut out from the light. In vain do you calculate that the consideration you still command, and the influence and power still at your disposal, will close the mouth of those bold accusers who have obtained, and have come forward to expose the proofs of your falsehood and deception. They remain, perhaps, dumb to-day; but to-morrow, being once out of your power, they will speak, and proclaim your acts. You may try, but in vain, to bribe and corrupt by friendly acts, by presents and rewards, the accomplices of your secret crimes; they may receive your gifts, and swear fidelity of secrecy; but, resembling yourself, they will betray you to-morrow, if they find it to their own advantage to do so.

“And men loved darkness,” saith Jesus, “rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” At the period of the coming of Jesus the majority of mankind were abandoned to the grossest sensuality. True liberty had disappeared from the earth; and, in its stead, nothing else was seen to exist but the most licentious tyrants, and their slaves, who were ever ready to throw incense upon the vices of their masters. But, alas! born amidst the gloom

of servitude and tyranny, men could not form an idea of a better existence; they imagined and believed that human life had always presented the same aspect. The heads of states alone appeared to have rights, and the subjects only duties. Nations, continually at war with each other, were forced to shed their blood for the ambition of their rulers, and even to congratulate themselves upon their sanguinary destiny. The most brutal passions, transformed into divinities, had their altars; but few men raised their hands towards the living God, the Creator of the universe. The learned doctors in the law disputed together, with great subtilty and acuteness, upon the most trifling subjects, and gave the most strange interpretations to the scriptures; but they regarded as quite superfluous the worship of God in spirit and truth, as well as the observance of his laws, adapted for the happiness of mankind. The Pharisees made open profession of their devotion in temple, and at home; they blinded the people by a display of virtue, intended to veil over from vulgar eye their secret vices. Constant attendance at the temple, sacrifices, fasts, and other religious rites, were the usual subject of their discourses; but none ever thought or dreamed of purifying their souls from their stains. The multitude were plunged in ignorance and superstition; hatred,

persecution, chains, and poison, were the reward of all efforts made to enlighten them ; and whoever rendered himself so culpable was denounced as an enemy of God and religion, a corrupter of the people, and seditious ; “for men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”

It was then that Christ appeared ; he revealed God and the truth ; and he caused the light to penetrate the gloom that prevailed. Thanks to his sublime instructions, the knowledge of the rights and duties of man, and of his hopes and destiny, were no longer the privilege of a few learned scholars ; but they soon spread amidst all classes of people, and amongst all nations. The most poor and needy received this doctrine, and the most ignorant soon conceived and comprehended it.

Royal and high-born sinners began to shake upon their thrones, and they saw the approach of their destruction. Tyrants became terrified, for they were afraid that with truth, liberty would also return into the world. Hypocritical priests turned pale with rage, for now the light of day was to expose their unworthiness ; and they were about to learn that it is not the sacerdotal robes, but the sanctity of the soul and wisdom, which make the true priest. The wicked of all grades, and of every sort, became exasperated and furious, when

they saw that arbitrary will and violence were no longer to be substituted for justice, and that pardon for sin was not to be obtained from Heaven at the price of sacrifices and fasts, of pilgrimages, and constant attendance in the temple, nor of long prayers, or rich gifts and endowments. Thence arose their persecution of Jesus, whose doctrine had become the light of the world; and thence their resolution to crucify him on the cross: "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd."

But in vain; such is the power of truth, that it can hurl from his throne the most powerful and tyrannical ruler; it can disband the most mighty armies, burst the chains borne for centuries, and render children capable of confounding the doctrines of philosophers. The walls of the temple of Jerusalem were converted into ruins; the altars of false gods reduced to dust; the sceptre of Rome, the mistress of the world, was demolished; old empires fell to pieces, and upon their ashes new empires sprang into existence. Amidst all these revolutions and dreadful changes, the doctrine of Jesus remained triumphant. The heavens and the earth may pass away, saith he, but the word of God, truth, and the salvation of the world, shall continue eternally.

Meanwhile, the children of darkness, slaves to



their passions, continued to fight against the spread of divine light. They took for their auxiliaries the rudeness and ignorance of barbarous people, who came, a few centuries after Jesus Christ, from distant and unknown lands, to conquer and hold possession of the most beautiful countries of the earth. The friends of darkness rejoiced at their union; all that antiquity had bequeathed of the grand, the beautiful, and the sublime, was destroyed; and Christianity itself became changed into a paganism of another nature. Men, led away by sacrilegious pride, substituted themselves for God. New sacrifices, new altars, and new fasts, reappeared under new Pharisees. Disputes arose upon the subject of the nature and person of Christ; they overlooked and forgot his doctrine, which was intended to bring back men to their divine model: and the external ceremonies of worship were substituted for the sanctification of the heart. The church became divided; schisms arose, and grew fierce upon new doctrines of which Jesus had never spoken, and of subtilties, opposed to the salvation and happiness of the Christian. But still all was in vain. The power and force of truth triumphed, and each succeeding age produced some fresh victory. Human follies gradually disappeared one after the other, and became buried in oblivion; but the word of God, truth—the

principle of life—has remained, and will continue to remain eternally.

At the present day even, the light of the sacred word of God struggles with the darkness of barbarism, and truth, with ignorance, error, and passion; for, in the present time, “every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.”

If Jesus reappeared on earth in his divine glory—the type of virtue without a stain, the example of humility, and the image of self-denial in all that excites the desires and inflames the passions of man, would many Christians be found attentive to his coming? Should we see many followers of Christ renounce their pride, their luxurious habits, and their cupidity, in order to lead a charitable and holy life, according to the example of their Master? Should we find libertines and usurers make an end of their vicious proceedings, in order to imitate that divine Master? And, should we, finally, behold many of those who are in the enjoyment of opulence and riches, make a better use of their possessions, in order to merit the name of disciples? If, when appearing among us in all the majesty and purity of innocence, Jesus elevated his indignant and condemning voice against artful intrigue, corrupting luxury, malicious slander, and hypocritical and mechanical devotion, by which

the temple of the Lord is dishonoured ; and if he censured that race of vipers who have the name of virtue on their lips, but whose hearts are devoted to vice, would he not be made an object of universal obloquy ? If, again, he addressed those who show a vindictive and revengeful spirit, and said to them, " Love your enemies ;" and if he turned towards the blind multitude and said, " This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips ; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," (Matt. xv. 8, 9,) would he not be designated and treated in turns as an enthusiast, a revolutionist, a sectarian, a propagator of doctrines inimical to the established worship, and as an audacious enemy of the throne and altar ? Would there not still be found accusers and a Caiaphas ? and, if even a new Pilate was to wash his hands before the people, and say, " I am innocent of the blood of this just man," would not the angry and enraged people still, as before, cry out, " Crucify him, crucify him ? "

Alas ! even in our days, the light of truth still has to struggle with the darkness of error and the interests of egotism ; and thence it is that, " every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved,"

seeing that every one feels his unworthiness. But "the word of God remaineth for ever, and truth will triumph." Your thrones and kingdoms will be crumbled into dust by the hand of time; your titles and orders of distinction will all waste away; your worldly wisdom will be forgotten; and the fruits of complaisance and flattery be for ever destroyed. But eternal truth will continue to exist and will be your judge; will condemn you, not only in the hearts of the just, but also in the conscience of your accomplices; and not only by the mouth of posterity, but also by the mouth of Him who judges the living and the dead, amidst the terrors of the eternal future. Continue, therefore, to persecute the propagators of truth; but as to the truth itself, know that you can neither bury it in the tomb, confine it with chains, nor pronounce the sentence of its banishment from the empire of the soul. Destroy, if you dare to do so, the confessors of truth; you cannot, however, put to death the soul, the immortal fountain of thought, and the seat of everlasting truth.

"But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God." He comes to the light because he acts by the power of God; God is with him, and operates in him; for it is from God that truth emanates. He comes to the light because he fears not

the tribunal of truth. His works are done after God; why should he fear man? The friend of truth, so dreadful and obnoxious to the wicked, himself fears nothing.

Such is the power of truth, that it fills its worshippers with sublime courage, and teaches them to despise the terrors of death. By it, strengthened infirmity may venture to face the presence of the most mighty and powerful masters of the earth. By it, the most humble individual acquires a dignity which is respected even by the trembling tyrant whose conscience accuses him of the crimes he has committed. By it, the most ignorant are gifted with the power of mortifying and bringing to shame the artifices of insidious eloquence and declamation. The luminous rays of truth electrify the soul with marvellous rapidity; and we try in vain to shut our eyes against their brilliancy. The wicked man may deny openly the power of truth; but he is not the less forced to pay homage to it in secret; neither is his heart the less pierced with its arrows.

A more noble and glorious conquest is obtained by enriching the human race with a new truth, than is acquired even by the subjection of a whole kingdom by force of arms. Kingdoms pass away, for they are of this earth; but truth endures for ever. Why, pusillanimous Christian, do you



tremble at the idea, that by performing your duties, you will create yourself enemies? Duty is from God; but what do you learn from man? Why should you blush at being, in the eyes of mortals, as just, loyal, and pious as you possibly can be, or even at appearing as virtuous as you really are and feel in your heart? Come, therefore, to the light, that thy deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God.

Do not then despair, O ye that suffer under the yoke of oppression! It is in vain that your innocence is condemned to pine away in obscurity; the day of truth must penetrate, sooner or later, even the tomb itself. If the living preserve an unworthy silence, God will give voice to the dead, so that you may be justified. Hope on, therefore, for God will not suffer virtue to be for ever oppressed; for virtue is truth. It will always find a defender even in him who may have sworn its destruction. Despair not, therefore, all ye whom the world despises and calumniates, because you have acted according to truth. One day your right will be acknowledged; and one day truth will bring before its tribunal the whole host of your adversaries.

O Thou, pure and inexhaustible source of all light and of all truth, my God and Father! it is to Thee that my soul is lifted on the wings of

devotion ; it is in Thee that it desires to sanctify and strengthen itself. I also, according to Thy ordinance, will act in conformity with truth, without the dread of man ; I will banish from me all the errors and passions which mislead me, and remain faithful to myself, in acting up to the laws promulgated by our Redeemer. In future, I will cease to be the echo of the language which the world may choose to receive and repeat, but which my conscience condemns. Far from me be that hypocrisy which, eager for corrupt praise, is base enough to sanction publicly what it condemns in secret !—No ; both in word and deed, I will belong wholly to truth, in my conversation and in my works, for it is that which will judge me ; I will consecrate, and if necessary sacrifice, to truth my life, after the example of Jesus and so many magnanimous martyrs.

O God, purify me ! strengthen me by thy truth—thy word is truth itself.—AMEN.





## CHOICE OF STATION AND PURSUIT IN LIFE.

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ST. MARK, i. 16—18.

“ Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea : for they were fishers. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.”

THERE is a destructive malady under which many men are forced to suffer and linger, the nature of which is a distaste, and accordingly a discontent, for their condition, profession, and establishment in life. This malady exists more universally than is generally imagined, and produces greater mischief in private than is usually believed. Whilst many a countenance puts on an expression of cheerfulness, a secret poison consumes the beating heart ; and the communication of the existence of the disease is withheld, because it is known by the sufferer that his complaint would be of no avail. Nevertheless, the confession is sometimes made when in the circle of a few intimate friends ; and

the individual who feels his misery sighs forth, at intervals, such expressions as, "If, instead of my present condition of life, I had selected a different one, I should have become quite another being; I should have found more happiness than has been my portion in that I was forced to follow." Or, again, "Circumstances obliged me to select this profession, to contract this marriage, although I knew, beforehand, that it would not make me happy. Had my taste and my heart been consulted, it would have turned out very differently."

Nothing, truly, can be more mournful than the situation which places a man in continual contradiction with himself. The desires of his heart constantly clash with the duties of his condition; his daily occupations excite within him aversion, and he pursues them with indifference, perhaps even with disgust. He never witnesses, without secret regret and sorrow, the fate of those who are, or appear to be, more happy than himself. All his connections and relations in life only produce thorns instead of roses; and he enters with greater zeal into other affairs than those which concern himself. Thence arise a multitude of inconveniences and troubles; but the reproaches called forth by his negligence produce but little or no effect upon him. He consoles himself with the idea that he cannot act otherwise; that it may

be regarded as a happy chance if things do at all succeed with him, considering that, in his labours, he experiences neither delight nor pleasure. If he was in the situation more suitable to his taste, and if he could act in the condition most adapted to his inclinations, he would be found to be better, more zealous, and more worthy of consideration and esteem, than many others who were in the enjoyment of a more favourable position, but who, at the same time, knew not how to take advantage of it. He reproaches and condemns his parents, his relations and friends, or the fate which has not assigned to him, in this life, the condition for which he believes himself to be born.

A similar feeling of discontent is painfully experienced also by many females, who silently suffer the affliction of being united in a marriage forced upon them, and completely opposed to their wishes. Very often it happens that females have no more liberty in their choice of a husband, with respect to his qualities and condition in life, than many young men in the choice of a profession or trade. Thence it is that marriage often produces unhappiness, and especially so when no children are born to give a charm to that state, and the maternal feelings are wanting to fill up the melancholy void in the heart of the wife. The uniformity of domestic life only aggravates her



sufferings; and her imagination sometimes finds a pleasure in secretly indulging in desires, at least exceptionable, if not culpable. She regards herself as the victim of destiny; she seeks consolation away from her home in frivolous and trifling amusements; the domestic arrangements of home become confused and disordered; and, eventually, the husband himself has recourse to pleasures and enjoyments abroad as a substitute for the lost comforts and delights of home. The married couple no longer feel that confidence towards each other so necessary to their happiness; and each studiously conceals within his or her breast desires which they dare not venture to make known to each other. Thus it is that the foundation is laid for the coldness which produces misconceptions and disputes; and, too often, when followed up by unwise and imprudent conduct, it becomes a source of dissention and animosity, until, at length, the holy tie is broken of itself, or it is dissolved by legal authority.

The discrepancy between the tastes of men and their condition or calling, is a frequent and sometimes disastrous cause of their misery. But what is the origin of this evil which thus destroys domestic happiness to the very root?

The foundation, no doubt, is already laid by the hand of fate in the earliest moment. Man does

not choose his own disposition and talents ; they are born with him, and it is education and experience which work their development. But they call forth also a predominant taste for this or that kind of life, adapted to the faculties of each individual. If, on the other hand, man finds it impossible to attain the position in which he could make his talents most available, thence must necessarily arise an internal contradiction, the source of continual discontent.

It often happens that the talents and taste of a young man are displayed too late ; and, were even his parents ever so much inclined and able to introduce him to the most suitable career, they still cannot know which may prove the best adapted for him. We often see young men, to whom is left the liberty of choice, mistaken even in themselves, and embrace a profession for which they will never be fitted when their powers have become completely developed.

We have beheld men of superior talents, capable of governing nations with wisdom, or of enlarging the field of science, forced by adverse circumstances and events, to devote their life to agricultural or mechanical pursuits. Ought we, when witnessing this striking contrast, to reproach the wisdom of God in the distribution of His gifts ? Certainly not ! For this agriculturist has, with a laudable

spirit, exerted himself to improve the cultivation of the earth by new inventions; and the mechanic, gifted with talent, has spared no pains to bring his art to a state of perfection hitherto quite unknown. Providence, in order to promote the happiness of mankind, had appointed them to a station in which such distinguished and elevated minds are not often to be met. The plan of the creations of God, and of the destinies directed by his providence, is always more comprehensive than we can possibly imagine. Nothing takes place without an object; the smallest plant has not been fixed in the spot we find it in without a motive; and the stones we stumble over in the field are not placed there without some useful intention.

But the short-sightedness of man cannot always penetrate the profound views of the Ruler of the universe; and a self-love and conceit, which are ever the fruits of ignorance or half-knowledge, reproaches with arrogance where the human soul ought to employ no other language than the silence of adoration.

Finally, when the object which Providence points out to man is not obtained, the fault always rests with man. His passions and his follies have caused him to strike into a wrong path, and have blinded him against his real good. It is not God who creates the struggles within the soul of

man, but it is man who opposes the designs of God.

Parents themselves, in the education of their children, often sow the seeds of this future discontent. The ambition of the father, the vanity of the mother, disguised under the names of love and tenderness, ensure, by their imprudent conduct, the eventual unhappiness of their progeny. The sons receive an education that is not at all proportioned to the career of life which the circumstances they are placed in render it expedient in them to embrace. They are accustomed in early life to live as if they were masters, whilst they can never expect to be otherwise than servants. Their heads are filled with matter which has no connection whatever with the knowledge necessary to an artisan. Is it then to be wondered at, if the young man expresses disgust for a pursuit he follows from necessity, after he has received a taste for occupations totally different in their nature?

It often happens that parents, in their pride, decide upon the future career of the infant whilst yet in its cradle, before they can even know whether or not it may have the inclinations and dispositions necessary to fulfil the duties. It is determined upon that, for the glory of its family, it shall occupy a more brilliant position than either its father or forefathers. Thus, the son of the

artisan is destined for trade or commerce, although he may not possess any fortune; and the son of the plain citizen, without talents or vocation for study, attends the university, and seeks to become a master of arts—a minister of the established church. But, alas! often too late, and when the better portion of life has been consumed in the preparation for a station so ambitiously chosen, the error is perceived and acknowledged, and pride is followed by repentance.

Parents only feel the error they have committed when they behold their son break down in the career they have thrown him into, or when they find him remain stationary below mediocrity; without being able, for want of the necessary means, to gain independence or dignity in the station to which they had made him aspire.

The mania which exists with many parents to have their children, as well as themselves, elevated above their condition, is unfortunately an evil which is too general in the present day. Mankind no longer knows how to seek and find happiness and contentment in the lot which has been assigned to it by Providence, but in its self-love is resolved to revise and improve the ordinances of HIM who directs and regulates our destinies.

This error is more especially observable in the education of females. Far from forming their



mind for the simplicity and for the love of domestic life, which should render happy the future partner of their life, they are accustomed to pursuits and pleasures for which it often happens that their husband feels no taste, and which his fortune can not afford. Instead of keeping together and economising the marriage portion, which would assist the husband in his speculations, it is too often spent in luxury, in the hope that a rich man will prefer the brilliant accomplishments of a young person educated for the fashionable world, to the advantages presented by the possession of a moderate fortune and a modest and simple, but sincere and virtuous, exterior. The consequences of this line of conduct, or rather this mismanagement, are unhappily but too well known. The honest man, who feels that he is not in a state to meet so many expenses, or to satisfy the many wants to which the spoilt and delicately brought up daughter has always been accustomed, renounces with a wise prudence all idea of uniting himself to her. He selects in preference a female who, instead of a love for luxury, brings him domestic virtues and a dower sufficient to contribute to their mutual comfort and happiness. Elegant poverty is passed by ; and, consequently, the plans of ambitious vanity become less extravagant in their hopes and prospects in proportion

as age increases and the bloom of youth fades away.

Thence arises the great number of unmarried females, especially in the larger towns, where the mania for rivalling those that are richer than themselves increases every day. Thence proceeds the melancholy state of those females whose days are consumed in loneliness, or who are reduced to the extremity of uniting themselves to men whose education and condition in life, by no means correspond with the hopes and expectations their imagination so glowingly represented to them. Here is seen the contradiction which exists between the distinguished talents, the noble inclinations, on which some pique themselves, and the sphere in which they are obliged to limit their action; here we may trace the origin of that disgust for their condition which brings as its consequence the ruin of domestic peace and the destruction of the happiness of married life!

But one thing which contributes much to corrupt the mind of young people of both sexes, and to inspire them with false ideas as to their vocation, is the taste for reading works they cannot or ought not to understand, and which has become so prevalent in both large and small towns. They fancy they are forming their mind and cultivating their taste when they peruse, without any selection in

their choice, and without consulting the experience of another person, intriguing romances, frivolous tales, and dramatic compositions of an immoral character, instead of those works useful for their instruction, and wherein they may learn the duties of their future state in life. They seek less to cultivate the mind than to occupy their imagination, already too much excited, with agreeable and delusive reveries. Their natural feelings become heightened and exalted, and attain a degree of sensibility which grows into folly or disease. Ordinary life appears to them insipid and repulsive, because it presents an aspect more severe than the fantastic world of their romances. They expect to find in this world things which it cannot and ought not to grant; and they reproach and condemn life, when they ought only to complain of the disordered state of their mind and the vices of their education.

I do not, however, wish at all to censure the productions of the imagination, but solely the misuse and abuse made of them by young people, and which is sanctioned by the negligence or indifference of parents. The recreations which have been provided for the mind of youth by men of genius and talent, ought not to monopolise all their time, nor form their most essential occupation. The food that is prepared with a view to gratify the

palate should never be allowed to take the place of more substantial and strengthening nourishment.

Young man, I speak to you of the future, of the happiness of your life, and of the choice of your condition and profession. Reflect deliberately and seriously upon the career you would wish to enter for the rest of your days. It is difficult, nay sometimes impossible, to retract steps once taken.

Do not allow yourself to decide in your choice of a condition by pride, by vanity, or by that levity of mind, which builds the future upon the uncertain favours of fortune ; but examine well the profession for which you are most suitable, and in which you may most distinguish yourself.

Consider, however, at the same time, whether or not you possess the necessary *external resources* which may assist you in the career you desire to enter upon. Decide within yourself solely by the conviction that the condition you have chosen is that in which you can best render useful for society the gifts with which God has endowed you. Do not contemplate *honour* or *easy gain* alone, but also *meritorious gain*, and the certainty that you will do honour to your condition. Every profession is honourable, if you are the man to obtain the crown it offers for knowledge, application, and utility. Make your selection, but with

prudence and with the consideration of the number of other men who devote themselves to the same condition, with whom you will come into rivalry, and what claims you possess for pre-eminence over them ?

Make your choice ; but remember that a wise man is in his proper place in every situation of life, and in every position, whether high or low. Remember that it is better to be the *first* in a condition less brilliant, than the *last* in a profession reputed to be more distinguished.

If you have already made your choice, or if you are constrained to make it against your wish, try to reconcile yourself to the condition you have embraced, and in this subjection respect the *will of God*. Pursue your career with confidence, for it will lead you to happiness ; perhaps you may not now so conceive it, but you will one day acknowledge it to be so, and you will render thanks to Providence. It depends upon yourself to make yourself useful in your profession, and to acquire therein consideration and fortune. Such must be your portion if you never deviate from these *three rules* : Labour with perseverance to become the most perfect in your situation ; make yourself friends in your sphere, by rendering service and acting with benevolence to all around you ; and never separate yourself from God, nor oppose his



will ; for he alone can bless your career in life, and assure your happiness.

Yes, even in an unpleasant but unchangeable situation, Providence has given you the power to be happy, if you possess sufficient strength and reason not to rebel against your destiny ; and if you have courage to subdue your obstinacy, and to follow the vocation Providence has assigned to you.

Your discontent does not proceed from your situation, but from your vanity and your stubbornness. Look around you, and behold how many thousands of men live contented in the same position as yourself, and without the advantages you enjoy ! But your obstinacy and your faint-heartedness make you more and more insensible to the good you might find in your sphere ; you lose by your own fault the days of happiness, which you would otherwise see smile upon you were you more wise.

None can select the condition he wishes to fill in the world ; it is God who chooses ! He knows better than yourself what, in this vast concatenation of destinies, can best promote your welfare, and the general good. Often it happens that the prince longs to descend from the throne into the happy privacy of the middle ranks of society ; the soldier desires the quiet and secure position of the peasant ; the ecclesiastic wishes to exchange his

sphere for the more active occupation of the merchant; and the tradesman would prefer the less occupied but more steady life of the artisan. Thus, each condition of life has its troubles, which are peculiar to it.

Therefore, fulfil your duties within the sphere in which you have been placed; pluck up or trample on the thorns you may meet with; be less sensible to the vexations of your condition in life, and more alive to the pleasures it presents. There is no profession in which you might not develop and make use of your talents. You wish for honour, but no condition can of itself give you that; it is the particular ability you show in your own situation that can make you worthy of esteem.

And to you too, young female, let me address a few words of good advice. Your future lot in life is uncertain; you know not whether your hand may be demanded in marriage or not, or by whom. Endeavour, nevertheless, to become such as not to be unhappy with your husband, whoever he may be. Expect little from chance, but depend much upon yourself. Do not contract those habits of luxury and refinement, which at a later period you may find it difficult to enjoy or to give up. Let your chief ornaments be modesty, morality, and love for domestic life; and let your style of dress be dictated by a taste for simplicity and purity, and

avoid all display of fashion: the sensible man never selects his wife for her outward adornment, but for her virtues—the ornament of her soul. He always yields, with more justice, a preference for her whose modest exterior announces her wants and pretensions to be limited, but who is gifted with a dowry rich in her love of order, a saving disposition, and a desire for domestic life.

O my Father, who art in heaven, and who hast assigned unto me a condition according to Thy will, let me fulfil its duties with dignity; it is most adapted to my true interest, and it is Thou that hast placed me there. In fulfilling with honest zeal, and without interested or ambitious motives, the duties of my situation in all their extent, I shall accomplish Thy sacred will.—AMEN.





## THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

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ST. LUKE, xxi. 24.

“ And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations : and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”

WHATEVER difference of opinion may have prevailed amongst our earliest Christian forefathers, relating to matters upon which human reason cannot pronounce its judgment with certainty, they were nevertheless united in their feelings upon the subject of recognising the sanctification as the main object of the doctrine of the Saviour. They continued for a long time connected together by the ties of humility, patience, and meekness. They considered themselves as constituting one body, animated and sustained by the spirit of Jesus Christ. They acknowledged one only Saviour, one only faith, one only baptism, one only God and Father of all, above all, with all, and in all. There might exist a diversity of ideas respecting divine things ; but the object remained

the same, the sanctification by truth, until all had arrived at the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, as Paul expresses himself when addressing the Ephesians : " Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, into a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ " (iv. 13).

Meantime, whilst the Gospel was silently propagated from land to land, and from people to people, the period had arrived when the Jewish empire was to be dissolved, and the capital destroyed, as had been predicted by Jesus Christ.

This event was attended with the most important consequences for Christianity ; only a few individuals now survived of those who could glory in having been the disciples and immediate companions of the Saviour during his sojourn upon earth ; but all retained the recollection of his great prophecy, handed down by oral tradition and the sacred writings of the Evangelists. The terrible accomplishment, in all its exact details, of the prediction of Jesus, could not but exalt beyond doubt the faith of his surviving followers.

The same as at the period when Jesus was amongst them, forty years previously, the Jews were now still filled with blind and obstinate zeal for their religious rites, and Mosaic regulations, without having become better men ; on the con-



trary, their hearts were corrupted by selfish baseness. They attended, certainly, the worship of their temple with studious care, observed the fasts strictly, prayed in regular order according to prescription, and imagined with that to have fulfilled all their religious duties. They calculated upon having purified themselves from all sin by the sacrifices, which only served to enrich the priests; the possessions of the earth, money, honours, and the pleasures of the senses, were alone the object of their existence. Each only thought of himself and his own hearth, indifferent to everything else; everything was mercenary with them; and birth, descent, riches, and beauty were held in greater estimation than either knowledge, virtue, or merit. Mutual confidence, faith, and fidelity had long since vanished; and even patriotism had yielded to national pride and a hatred and contempt towards the neighbouring nations around. The Jews plunged more and more into a state of ignorance, and despised all who possessed knowledge and were anxious to impart information amongst the people, persecuting them as innovators, and treating them as enemies to the ancient order of things. They adhered more firmly to their blind prejudices, and would not imagine for a moment the possibility that Judæa, the people of God, and the holy city should ever

be destroyed. They were certainly not insensible to the oppression they endured under the tyrannical sway of Rome; but this universal state of necessity and danger, far from reminding them of that one thing which might save them, and which was offered to them by Jesus, only served to harden them the more in their egotism. Instead of seeking for the salvation of the country, not in hoarding up riches, but in the practice of virtue, in a nobleness of sentiment, and in the moral accomplishment of their duty towards God, they divided themselves into hostile parties, hating, despising, and persécuting each other.

Thus, it was an easy task for the Romans to oppress more and more a nation enervated by corruption and weakened by ignorance and discord. Judæa, after having for a time the appearance of liberty, under native kings, dependent upon the Romans, was now treated as a mere province, and ruled with arbitrary sway by Roman governors, who even arrogated to themselves the right of control over the temple and the nomination of the high priests. With each succeeding year, the people were harassed and burthened with fresh taxes and heavy duties; the country became quite exhausted, and the authorities seizing, at last, the money contained in the sacred treasury, only

replied to the complaints of the people with haughty insolence and scoffing insults.

But all this suffering and misery with which they were visited, produced no change in the feelings, nor improvement in the conduct, of the people of Israel. The higher classes crouched and prostrated themselves with abject humility before the rulers; and, throwing upon the shoulders of the lower classes as much as was in their power of the public burdens, thus reduced a greater portion of them to beggary. In their blind selfishness they did not remember that their fortune must be swallowed up in the gulf of public misery whenever the despair of the people should lead them to revolt.

The disposition for rebellion had already manifested itself on several occasions. Judas the Galilean, in concert with Zadoc the Sardinian, had already excited and stirred up the multitude, and furnished them with arms, under the pretext that the law of Moses ordained that Jehovah alone was to be obeyed, and that no human ruler was to be acknowledged. But the vigilance of the Romans promptly suppressed the tumult, which was punished by fresh burdens and renewed taxation.

The discontent became now more and more general; numerous families were in a state of star-

vation; many abandoned their homes altogether, and resorted to robbery and murder; debased already by the want of education, they, in their wild state, had become wholly inaccessible to generous feelings. The whole country was nothing else but one scene of universal pillage and devastation, and there was no longer security either for life or property. And amidst all this misery, false prophets presented themselves to make a profit of the disorder: here was to be seen a new Messiah, and in another quarter rose up a champion who was to re-establish the people of God and the throne of David over the bodies of the slaughtered Romans. One of these, an Egyptian Jew, succeeded even in collecting together a force of thirty thousand men; he encamped upon the Mount of Olives, before Jerusalem, and promised the superstitious and bigoted multitude that he would prove the divinity of his mission by causing the walls of Jerusalem, at a simple sign, to fall down before them. But the Governor, Felix, with his practised troops, surprised these hordes of robbers, put the greater portion of them to the sword, and, dispersing the rest, visited the sedition with severe and dreadful vengeance. And this is what Jesus had predicted: "And then, if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or lo, he is there; believe him not. For false Christs and false pro-

phets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect." (St. Mark, xiii. 21, 22.)

The injustice of the Roman governors, and their contempt for divine and human laws, equalled, at length, the abjection and disunion of the Israelites. For, whenever a nation allows itself to be trodden under feet, and crushed by the overbearing pride and tyranny of a few unjust rulers in authority, it is always the vices of the people which furnish them with the power. Whilst the Romans were engaged in committing the most shameful abuses, the high priests were to be seen in constant dispute with the inferior priesthood; and, amongst the people, one party was continually opposed to the other. All this could only end in a mortal hatred against the oppressors, and a desire for vengeance; one universal revolution was the result, and the Roman garrisons were forced to surrender the various strong places they occupied, and even Jerusalem itself was given up. The wild and furious people, now quite unmanageable, and without any plan, abandoned themselves completely to the commission of every possible crime and outrage. Menahem, the son of Juda, the Galilean, continued for a long time at the head of the revolutionists, who fought with success against the Roman legions, until Vespasian, the subse-



quent emperor of Rome, advanced with a superior army, and, making himself master of Galilee, laid siege to Jerusalem.

The misery had now reached its height. But a people without virtue is a people without strength. The old party spirit of the Jews was not appeased by even the impending dangers with which they were surrounded: in the very heart of the besieged city, the hatred and hostility between the various parties still prevailed, the populace plundering the rich, and murdering the wise men. The greatest atrocities were committed, each thinking less to save his country than to crush his rival; public safety and preservation were no longer considered; but personal revenge alone formed the object to be gratified.

Thus arrived the moment predicted by Jesus Christ: "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto." (St. Luke, xxi. 20, 21.) The followers of Jesus had remembered these words, for all had quitted the city before the commencement of the siege, and had retired to Pella, a Cœlosyrian town, formerly situated in the half-tribe of Manassia. Here they

formed a new community, and awaited with painful anxiety the sequel of events.

Vespasian, the Roman general, cunningly availed himself of the prevailing discord among the Jews, and the hatred of parties in Jerusalem. He purposely allowed the war he carried on against them to extend during a period of several years; he was anxious that this nation, without virtue and without discipline, should weaken itself by its internal divisions, and prepare for itself its own ruin. This object he attained when, having been elected emperor, he transferred the command of the army into the hands of his son Titus. Israel, at this moment, similar to the fruit that falls from the overburdened tree, was completely ripe for destruction. Titus now besieged the city more closely; the danger increased, but with that increased also the fury of parties within the besieged walls. The people, however, defended themselves with the rage of despair; and Titus, his heart filled with feelings of humanity, felt pity towards that ancient and splendid city, so renowned for its glory.

He was desirous and willing to make peace with the Jews, but they obstinately refused all his proposals. Meantime their misery became, through the horrors produced among themselves, more and more awful. The Roman general, finding there was no chance or prospect of concluding a

peace, made a decisive assault upon the city. He made himself master of Fort Antonia, the Jews gradually retreating, sword in hand, from street to street towards the temple; this sacred edifice, however, was also assaulted and captured, and became a prey to the flames, more, however, through the rage and negligence of the Jews themselves than the revenge of the conquerors. The people, still fighting, retreated now to the more elevated part of the city; but this also fell into the hands of the Romans, and the whole of Jerusalem was soon reduced to a heap of ruins and ashes.

In this war, which had continued during a period of nearly five years, more than a million of Jews perished. Thus was accomplished the dreadfully prophetic word of Jesus Christ: "As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." (St. Luke xxi. 6, 23, 24.)

Nearly ninety-seven thousand Jews were made prisoners, driven into other countries, and sold like cattle, in the public markets. Jerusalem, which, in former periods, had been conquered five different times, was now entirely razed to the ground, seventy years after the birth of Christ, so that not one stone stood upon another—a mass of rubbish forming now the substitute for that once grand and pompous city! Those poor Jewish families, which still remained in the land, were treated as slaves, and subjected to the most heavy imposts, for the enjoyment of the melancholy pleasure of still dwelling on the desolate spot of their forefathers. Roman soldiers, whose time of service had expired, divided among themselves the abandoned habitations, and established themselves at Emmaus, Nazareth, and other places around.

In spite of the humanity with which, subsequently, some of the emperors treated the Jews, they nevertheless persisted, after their dispersion, in their senseless hatred against other nations. Amidst an ignominy which had visited no other nation, they still held themselves to be the chosen people of Jehovah, and, scattering and plotting here and there revolts, they drew upon themselves the hostility of the various nations and their governments. Even in Judea itself, where,

during the peace, their number had considerably increased, a numerous body had rebuilt their dwellings amidst the ruins of Jerusalem, they again, fifty years after the first universal calamity of their country, raised the standard of rebellion. A new Messiah, called Bar-Cochab, overpowered the weak garrisons stationed in various fortified towns. The Romans, however, returned in considerable force, and Judea was for ever changed into a desert. Nearly six hundred thousand Jews were destroyed by the sword, and those who survived were dragged in chains into slavery. Jerusalem was thus for ever ruined; the malediction of Heaven appeared to rest eternally over this fated city. The heathens had built for themselves, out of its ruins, close to the spot, a city which bore the name *Ælia Capitolina*; and, a few centuries afterwards, it resumed the name of Jerusalem, without, however, being on the same spot as the former capital. The Jews were forbidden to approach it on pain of death; but, eventually, they were permitted to visit once a year the holy scenes of former days, and there give utterance to their songs of lamentation. The new city was inhabited, during four centuries, by heathens; after which it fell into the hands of the Arabs and Turks. Upon the mount on which, in former times, the temple of Jehovah stood, was built a Mahometan mosque.



The Jews, led captives amongst the various nations, retained, even in their deplorable situation, all their defects and bad dispositions. They always showed themselves selfish, seditious, and full of prejudice and superstition, as in the time of the Saviour of the world. They had formerly exclaimed, His blood be upon us and our children! Alas! this maledictory vow was but too dreadfully fulfilled. They beheld the spiritual kingdom of God extend itself all over the world, founded, as it was, by him whom their fathers crucified upon the cross of Golgotha. This was the kingdom of the Messiah, predicted by the prophets. But they persevered obstinately in their incredulity, and in their contempt for all other religions and nations; the more heavily they were oppressed, the more were they fortified in their attachment, not only to the law of Moses, but to all the superstitions invented by priests, and which circulated from mouth to mouth as interpretations of old or foundations of new laws. These traditions, thus verbally handed about, and subsequently put into writing and known by the name of the Talmud, became, in the hands of the Rabbins, a means of keeping the people in a state of subjection and dependence, and thus, in the universal ignorance it was their object to preserve, they maintained their own ascendancy and influence.

This heavy yoke, which thus enslaved the mind of the people, contributed not a little to make them still more obstinate in their superstitious opinions, in their hopes, and in keeping them distinct and isolated from all other nations. Led astray by their national pride, and by their hatred for all that belonged not to themselves, they no longer held it to be sinful to betray and impose upon the stranger; and which drew upon them everywhere fresh ill-usage and persecution. Persians and Arabs, Egyptians and Romans, Turks and Christians, were all alike filled with aversion against this incorrigible race, so crippled in the mind, and equally hardened in their mad obstinacy and hereditary vices. And since the destruction of Jerusalem down to the present day, not a century has passed over, nor a country has hardly existed, where the descendants of Israel have not perished either by the sword, the bowstring, the rack, or some other equally cruel and dreadful punishment. To bear even the very name of Jew was often to the child a cause sufficient to merit death. Deprived of any fixed abode, they were often to be seen wandering amidst forests and deserts; in no part respected, but, at most, only tolerated by pity and mercy, they were never certain of the enjoyment either of their property or lives.

In vain did they turn their eyes to the ancient land of their fathers. For them there remained no longer a Judea, no longer a Mount Zion, no longer a temple upon the holy hill. They kissed, with abject submission, the dust from the feet of the nations they inwardly despised, with whom however they found an asylum, but by whom they were again turned adrift as soon as they had acquired some property by fraud and usury. Their continually increasing numbers, amidst all their misery, once regarded as a source of glory and bliss, had become now a cause for malediction, and only served to aggravate their sufferings. As they had formerly expelled from amongst them, with implacable hatred, the disciples and instructors of the Christian religion, so now, in return, they found themselves and their descendants rejected with an animosity not less inexorable by the entire Christian world, more especially in the times of ignorance and barbarity. For, during a long period, the opinion was generally held amongst Christians, that the millions of Jews distributed in all parts of the earth had merited their unhappy fate, not so much on account of their obstinate prejudices and inward corruption, but rather through the crime committed by their fathers upon the life of Jesus Christ.

Only in later times, when true Christianity had

civilised the barbaric nations who styled themselves Christians, the followers of Moses began to feel the yoke of oppression become lighter, particularly in those countries where they joined in the progress of civilisation, and abjured their prejudices and exclusive hatred. The more wise governments at length acknowledged that the religious persecutions practised by the Christians, and the oppression under which they held the Israelites, had not less contributed to their degradation than the alteration made by the Rabbins in the law of Moses. They were granted the right of possession and the privilege of civil liberty ; whilst pains were taken to humanely elevate them from the state of fraud and usury, in which they had hitherto existed, to that of honest and upright dealings. Men of enlightened mind and virtuous principles rose up from amongst them, and laboured for the improvement of their fellow-believers.

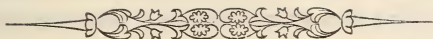
Thus, after suffering during a period of nearly two thousand years, Israel may, at length, once more hope to emerge from its abject state, and resume its station in the social ranks of the human race.

Eternal God ! my Father ; Father of all nations and of all worlds, a memorable and terrible example hast Thou shown, in the fate of the descendants of Abraham, to prove that malediction

follows sin, and that the ruin of nations is the consequence of their corruption. Terrible art Thou, O God, in thy judgments! But it is not Thou that punisheth the people; they chastise themselves. The transgression of thy divine ordinances is self-destruction, and vice produces self-torture. No, it is not Thou that hast condemned this unfortunate people, thus dispersed all over the earth.

I will not, therefore, condemn them; I will not hate them; but I will show charity towards them, and soften their sufferings. Whether it be Jew or Christian, he who loves virtue and the practice of justice, is agreeable to God. Many of the descendants of Israel, at the present day, in proportion as they increase in wisdom, honour more and more the divine spirit that animated Jesus, too long misunderstood by them. Let us, therefore, unite together for the cultivation of the spirit and the exaltation of the mind, until we all become united in faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, the Father of all men.—AMEN.





## THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTHDAY.

ST. LUKE, xv. 10—24.

“ Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. And he said, A certain man had two sons : and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land : and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country ; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat ; and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger ! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and I am no more worthy to be called thy son ; make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet : and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it ; and let us eat and be merry : For this, my son, was dead, and is alive again ; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.”

My age is this day increased by one year more ; and I am thus one year nearer the conclusion of my life. I have passed some happy days ; but, at

the same time, I have experienced many sorrowful hours. Has my spirit thereby become matured? Perhaps I may have acquired knowledge, or probably, in certain respects, advanced in influence and importance; my fortune, too, may have become augmented. But those are merely external advantages, of which a single moment of misfortune may deprive me; and even at the turn of the new year, all these possessions may be exchanged for a few handfuls of earth thrown upon my coffin!

And why have I been endowed with life? Why have I passed this series of years, in joy and sorrow, amidst prosperity and misfortune, and changing events and revolutions? As a man, and inhabitant of this world, I know what I am in the eyes of my fellow-creatures, and in my various relations with the different connections that have succeeded each other; but do I know what I am in the sight of God, as regards my future state and my participation in the eternal world?

Alas! secret doubt and anxiety overwhelm my soul! Another year of my earthly sojourn has passed away: am I in a better state than I was previously? By what good and generous works have I distinguished this year? Behold, all my deeds and acts stand now recorded before the Supreme Judge! Can I congratulate myself with confidence upon one good action? Oh, how

the little portion of good that I may have done is surrounded with circumstances with which I have to reproach myself! How unjustly have I acted towards others and towards myself! What culpable desires have I not nourished, and what unjust and uncharitable decisions and opinions have I not pronounced against my fellow-creatures! How numerous have been the ebullitions of anger, hatred, pride, and jealousy, that have escaped me; and what inhuman thoughts, what impious and savage feelings, have at times overpowered me! Unhappy that I am, where have been my prayers and my vows—what has been my religion, my faith? Can I appear before my Judge in the last hour of my existence, otherwise than with a conscience stained with guilt? How can I venture to hope for that eternal happiness which is alone the reward of just and virtuous conduct? Can I depend upon the mercy of Him who is the severe and incorruptible Arbitrator of my life? Alas! I must hope for mercy; for I shall only be in heaven what I have tried to become on earth.

And ought I to abandon myself to despair? for who will give me back this lost year—this portion of my life—so foolishly spent? Shall I hastily invoke the merits of my Saviour, in order that I may share in the benefit to be derived therefrom? And yet what sacrilegious madness, to pretend to

wish for the holiness of the purest of beings, whilst I continue to take delight in the enjoyments of the world! Alas! the decrees of God are unchangeable, and his serious words are an eternal oracle; for He says: "What man has sown, he must reap!" Therefore, let this new year He opens for me, be my year of preservation and safety; let me struggle against all the sinful desires of my heart. But this will not suffice; for the inanimate stone in my path is also exempt from sin. I will do more; I will become wise, humane, and moderate—I will become a Christian.

And it is not too late to follow such a resolution; for the Creator, who has prolonged my career, has permitted me to retain the strength to do good. God wishes the sinner to live, in order that he may perform those works which may purify his soul and bring him nearer to the presence of Himself. It is not too late; for Jesus opens his arms that I may approach the Father through him, by obeying the commandments. Was it not he who said, Come to me all ye that are laden, and I will give you ease? I also am overburthened with sin, and I bear the weight of a life full of transgression.

It is not too late! Nevertheless, my sins, the remembrance of which bends me down, and their melancholy consequences, form altogether a far

more considerable mass in proportion to the little good I perceive here and there, in the course of my past life. And I sometimes feel overwhelmed with fear and anxiety, when I ask myself, if the good I may do during the hours, days, and years, of the existence which God shall still grant me to enjoy, can banish the recollection of all the sinful acts I have committed in my past life? Will not the numerous weeds that I formerly strewed along my path, choke up the few good seeds I may still strew around me? Merciful Father, enter not into judgment with Thy servant; grant, that I may cast a veil over the time thus far lost in the career of my life!

God, in His mercy, exercises the same compassion towards a sinner, that a father shows towards his child. Even amongst mankind, the father willingly forgets the errors and faults committed by the child during a series of years, if that child repents and returns a better son to the arms of its father. The past transgressions have been sufficiently chastised, for each fault carries with it its pain and correction; and such is the organisation of the moral world, that all evil, great or little, is punished by the consequences it brings. Let the slave, then, of pleasure, think upon the hours to be passed in agony, and meditate on the sufferings of a worn-out constitution. Such is the punishment for his public



or private sins, and which may, perhaps, pursue him to his bed of death. But you still live! *you are not yet lost.* Turn, then, and with repenting heart, invoke the paternal goodness of your God; change your conduct; support with filial resignation the punishment of your sin; and make yourself useful at the same time, useful to others, in turning them from the vices of which you have yourself been a victim. Save their soul, and draw it from perdition, and you will thus ennoble your own; you will elevate yourself from the depth of corruption to a sublime and heavenly destiny.

You, who, covetous of riches, incessantly stretch out your hands towards the goods of other persons; you, who, envious of the honour of others, deprived them of their good name, and disturbed the repose and tranquillity of whole families; you, who, full of ambition, beheld in the world only yourself, hating the one and despising the other of your fellow-creatures, and trampling underground innocence and justice; you, whose debauchery lavishes away, in vain pleasure and mad intemperance, money enough to provide for the maintenance of whole families, and who, in the end, find your health reduced and completely shattered, and your conscience a prey to self-reproach; you, who, inflamed with the passion for gambling, lost, for the sake of miserable gain, your precious hours in

the anxiety of fear and solicitude of a hope always deceived, whilst at home might be seen to flow the bitter tears of sorrow and regret, produced by your thoughtless and unfeeling conduct; and you, finally, whose blunted sensibility or delicacy no longer possessed the power to withhold you from shameful and degrading crime—all of you, unhappy mortals, who now are a prey to shame, repentance, perhaps to despair, turn your sorrowful looks to a life spent without virtue and without benefit, and exclaim, It is too late! No, no—be comforted—there is still time—you are not lost. Endure the punishment of your vices, but receive them as useful messengers from God; they tell you to sow for the future better seed—seed which bears the fruit of eternal life.

“Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light” (Ephes. v. 14). Such is the voice which sounds in the ear of the sinner the Divine word. Awake, cries also the voice of his conscience, will you remain for ever plunged in the sleep of vice?

It is but too just that sin should be likened to death, for it too truly kills all that is noble in man—his soul, created for immortality. All that he has of earthly origin returns to the earth; that alone which is divine contains the principle of life.

“Because I live, ye shall live also” (John, xiv. 19).

The sinner himself need not perish ; the road to salvation is open before him. His Father himself calls out to him. The voice of Nature is heard even in the sad results of transgression ; it calls to the sinner—Return to thy God ; despair not ; “ There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”

But let us not deceive ourselves with an erroneous notion of the idea conveyed by *the return to God*, and *the love of Jesus*. We must not fancy we have gained the victory when, with a contrite heart, we repent of our faults ; when we shed torrents of tears, and we shun the pleasures of life, even the most innocent ; when we hurry from church to church, or when, on every occasion, we have the name of Jesus in our mouth, and console and re-assure ourselves with the thought of the merits of the blood of the Lamb offered up for our sins. Many persons, when they find their fortune and happiness destroyed by their career of vice, have recourse to this false path ; their repentance is not love of Jesus, but a bitter dread of the consequences of their sins in the life to come. Their pretended conversion is not a return to God, but a fresh delusion, or excitement of their soul. Their overheated imagination soon becomes deadened, and their sensibility benumbed ; for nothing exaggerated can endure long. Then

they accuse themselves of lukewarmness and want of ardour; they deplore the depravation of their nature; they return into their former state of anxiety, and they never arrive at the object their heart desires to attain.

How, then, shall the sinner return to God? What can guarantee us the love of Jesus? He himself, the eternal Son of the Father, has told us: "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." (John, xv. 14.) The Son of God, therefore, requires from us neither idle words, long and endless prayers, nor vain exclamations of *Lord! Lord!* Neither does he require strict and forced devotion, from which no good can arise, nor, in fact, the total denial of all innocent enjoyments of life; but, what he requires from the penitent and contrite sinner who implores his pardon, are *deeds* and works of sincere repentance and true amendment.

What shall I do to be saved? asks he that sincerely desires to be the friend of Jesus. To which the Lord replies, Love God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself.

Thus you will find the way that leads to your return to God; but this way is not so easy of access. To proceed along that path you must undergo a thousand struggles against inveterate passions, destructive habits, and the corruption of



our proper nature. Doubtless, it is more easy to make prayers than to renounce voluptuousness and luxury, to constantly attend devout and pious assemblies than to reconcile ourselves with our enemies, and giving proofs of Christian affection to him who refuses all reconciliation: it is much more easy to fast and to sigh in lamentation than to act as the good father of a family after a life spent in dissipation and gambling; it is more easy to devoutly console ourselves with the wounds of Jesus than to heal the wounds we have ourselves inflicted by unkind words and uncharitable acts; finally, it is more easy to distribute here and there trifling alms than to restore to the proper owner what we have acquired by cunning, fraud, and perjury. Meantime, the true and only road embraces all that can be the most important to life and death; the salvation of the soul, peace upon earth, and happiness in heaven. This is the only means by which we can hope to return to the grace and favour of God, in becoming the friend of Jesus, the great Saviour of mankind. It is only thus we can expect to attain the hope, that the Judge of the dead, casting over our past life the veil of his mercy, will say to us: "Thy sins are forgiven thee!" (Luke, vii. 48.)

"O my Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be



called thy son," exclaimed the prodigal son to his father, in the language of the Scripture. But the father, filled with compassion and love, replied: "This, my son, was lost and is found again. Let us eat and be merry!"

O Heavenly Father, I also have sinned against Thee; I am not worthy to be called thy son; but thy mercies are infinitely more great than my faults. Thou desirest not the death of a sinner. Thou hast preserved me from thousands of invisible dangers, in order that I may this day rejoice at my conversion, and offer Thee the homage of a heart sanctified by thy grace. And this I can and will perform, God of infinite mercy! Neither eternity nor salvation are lost to me, although my past life has been vain for the purification of my soul. Thou hast allowed another career to open itself before me; and I will again commence a life, a life with Christ in God. I will be severe and inexorable towards my faults and infirmities, and indulgent to others, even if they offend me. I will suppress all evil desires in my heart; and, as often as they may assail me, I will fly from solitude, and entering again the bustling world, I will hasten to accomplish some good act towards my fellow-creature. I will make even my sins, and their melancholy effects, a blessing to others, by warning them of the dangers of temptation, and of the first

motives to commit crime, which, under the most attractive and seductive form, urge man on his career of vice, and drag him into the path of sin. I will endeavour to repair the evil that my levity or my corruption has produced, either publicly or privately, in the bosom of my family or in society. I will strive to make amends, even at the sacrifice of everything; for I dare not leave this world, and appear before thy tribunal, O my Sovereign Judge, with a conscience so heavily laden with guilt. And if I can destroy, by my reparation and amendment, all the evil I have caused; then, still, thou God of Justice, it will be upon thy mercy that I shall depend. I will forthwith continue to prove, by my conduct, that the resolution I have formed is, at least, both serious and holy. Let it not be despised, although, alas! it only rests upon my weakness. Grant me thy pardon for my sins, as I will forgive all that have sinned or offended against me. Forgive me, O God of mercy, forgive me for the sake of Jesus.—AMEN.





## DEATH FOR OUR COUNTRY.

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1 ST. JOHN, iii. 16.

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

SLEEP ye in peace, ye heroes, deliverers of your country! Your precious blood has not streamed forth in vain; the generous sacrifice of your lives has reconquered for a nation its lost dignity. Sleep in peace!—How do I say? No, you still live! Your ashes rest in peace, but your spirits celebrate your triumph. Immortal men, who have purchased with your lives the blessings of posterity, ye dwell with us in the mansion of our Father, the universe of our God; and there also live your works. The last of your deeds was the acquisition of that triumphant palm which crowned your mortal existence.

Alas! in the silence of the house of mourning, we shall doubtless hear the sobs and regrets of a sister that has to lament the loss of an affectionate brother; and the betrothed, the loss of a lover. We

behold the eyes of mothers dim with weeping, and the cheeks of young widows pale with sorrow. But, we ask, whence those tears? Your brothers, your lovers, your sons, and your husbands, still live; they have been received into the bosom of the God who gave them to you. After a few short, fleeting years, you will greet these blessed souls on your entrance into a more happy life. To die is the fate of humanity: why then lament that the hour of their death is arrived? It would have met them equally as certain when upon their bed of peace, in the tranquil security of their home, and in the arms of their family. Do you believe that, without the will of the Almighty, a single soul could receive its existence? Or, do you believe that, without the will of Him who governs the universe, the flame of a single life could be extinguished? Weep not, mourn not for those who, more worthy to be envied than many that are living, died the death of heroes. The termination of their career having now arrived, could they distinguish it more nobly than by a glorious and magnanimous action?

Our death, equally with our birth, presents nothing in itself whence man may assume any merit; both the one and the other result from the universal laws of nature. The death of an aged man, and the birth of an infant, may be important

to a family; but the infant and the aged man appear and disappear, the same as every other living creature. Millions of mortals die without their absence from this world being observed, such being the inevitable destiny of all men.

But death ceases to be indifferent in itself as soon as it is the concomitant of extraordinary circumstances, by either revealing a pusillanimous and craven character, or by its displaying a magnanimous and generous soul. The execution of a murderer, the death of a libertine destroyed by the excesses of a voluptuous life, the suicide of a man reduced by misfortune to the utmost despair, all equally fill us with horror and aversion. Their departure from this world is the result of their vices—of their public or private crimes. Nobody can envy their existence: who would wish to die such a death?

But our heart is filled with very different sentiments when we hear of the death of a man who has courageously sacrificed himself for his rights, his honour, and in the defence of his innocence. The grief or commiseration which we suffer for his fate is imbued with feelings of admiration. His death is the consequence of the nobleness of his sentiments, and of the energy of his virtue. The example of his last moments inspires and animates those that witness them; his last sigh has proclaimed the exalted



truth, that the virtues thus inculcated by the immortal spirit are more valuable to us than the mere existence of the fragile and perishable body.

We may, however, trace sometimes the prompting motive of such a death to egotistical pride. The energetic and virtuous sentiment which is its principle, is, no doubt, praiseworthy; but the world may still, perhaps, have gained but little by such an example. That which is most difficult to accomplish is what requires the greatest strength of mind, which is, to sacrifice life for the happiness of others. To die with pleasure for others, and thus merge our self-love in the love of our race, is a devotion which, far from being subjected to the suspicion of egotism, merits all the glory of heroic devotion.

Thus we behold civilised nations, as well as barbaric tribes, celebrate and do honour to him who dashes amidst the furious billows of the ocean, or precipitates himself into the mass of flames, to rescue his fellow-creature; as well as to him who exposes his life, and perishes, for the good of his country. Far from making this charitable sacrifice of life in the cause of friends, much less of strangers, there are few individuals now to be found who would show sufficient magnanimity to shed their blood even to save their dearest and most intimate relatives; for such is the degraded

state of covetous man, that few possess the noble courage to sacrifice, even for their relations, or for the unfortunate and wretched objects whose sufferings daily offer themselves to their pity, an insignificant portion of their own superfluities, or the most trifling share of the numerous comforts they regularly and uninterruptedly enjoy. Would, then, such selfish mortals, such slaves to their own sensual pleasures, be found capable of enduring pain and death, with generous enthusiasm, for the happiness of their fellow-creatures?

If, however, the death suffered for the protection of a few mortals, or for the preservation of the happiness of endeared relations and friends, is the most noble effort of magnanimous virtue, what is the death endured for the deliverance of a whole country—for thousands of our fellow-countrymen—men, women, infants, and aged men, of whom only a few may be known to us, and with whom we have nothing in common but the mere ties of civil society?—to die, not only for those we love, but sometimes even for our enemies: in one word, to die for our country?

Such devotion is as glorious as the vices of cowardice and treason are odious and despicable. Such is the contempt in which cowardice is held, that it is even the subject of ridicule to children and the weaker sex; and the traitor is as much an

object of horror to those he has not betrayed, as to those who have suffered by his treason. Death for one's country receives a double meed of approbation; for the generous foe lauds with enthusiasm the patriot who has sacrificed himself.

Of all the duties man owes to his fellow-mortals, this is the most difficult, and consequently the most sacred. The word of God commands us to perform this duty when it says: "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Jesus Christ, the divine image of perfected humanity, has given us, in his own devotion, a sublime example; for who could equal his exalted charity? He died not alone for his fellow-countrymen—not alone for a circumscribed country—but for all men: his was the death of the Saviour of the world. The most generous and magnanimous mortals can only follow his steps at an infinite distance, even in dying for a whole nation, or for the happiness of their posterity.

He who dies the victim of his duty, in spite of the constraint laid upon him, merits our respect. And what more sacred duty for man can there exist than to contribute to the well-being of his contemporaries and posterity? Whoever, therefore, animated by the sentiment of duty, exposes himself to the danger of losing his life, or even generously devotes himself to death, proves him-

self to be worthy of his vocation upon earth : heaven and earth yield to him the recompense due to his magnanimity. His end ennobles his previous life, which perhaps has passed in obscurity ; for he who knows how to die for the happiness of others, cannot be a man corrupted by vice. Capable of the most difficult sacrifice, he is sure to submit to less painful sacrifices. His heroic death is the guarantee of the strength of his soul. Perhaps, in former days, he may have had to reproach himself with some weakness ; perhaps he may have neglected his duties in the bosom of a peaceful and serene life ; but the hour of public danger was the hour of his reawakening. He assumed his natural dignity, and banished the recollection of his failings by the glory of his sacrifice. Others were perhaps more studious and faithful in the performance of their lighter duties, and more useful in moderate responsibilities ; but they could not comprehend sacrificing themselves for their country—they knew not how to die like him. Therefore, it is but true to admit, that this great sacrifice to patriotism ennobles a whole life hitherto without glory ; thus the brilliant sunset disperses the recollections of a day obscured throughout with fog and mist ; and thus the Christian, who ends his days with these sentiments, accomplishes all his duties together in the

same hour ; for, according to the instructions of our Saviour, devotion for the good of other men is the most noble of all duties, the sum and substance of the divine laws.

And as his end sheds glory upon the whole course of his existence, it thus becomes the glory and salvation of his country. The courage and bravery of warriors fallen in battle ennoble equally an entire nation ; their graves, the glorious monuments which decorate the distant fields of battle, are the most impregnable ramparts which defend their country. Long in after years, when they have ceased to exist, their names and their memory will contend and struggle with the pride and ambition of unjust foes. The most arrogant and audacious conqueror will feel himself forced to respect a people who have produced amongst them such heroes ; a people, inheritors of a glory which inspires the hearts of their descendants with the fire of enthusiasm at the recollection of their magnanimous ancestors.

The fruits of virtue are immortal like the souls which have produced them. Nothing takes place in the world, that is great or useful, which does not extend its salutary effects upon the most distant ages. The magnanimous death of heroes remains for ever a blessing for the country ; their shades live, as it were, amongst their latest



descendants, in order to lead them on in the path of glory they have traced out for them.

They have fulfilled their duties towards us. Peaceful liberty, and the hope of a renewal of public happiness, and of preserving for many years the advantages of peace, are the rewards of their sacrifice. It is for us, who are still in the enjoyment of life, to fulfil, on our part, the duties we owe towards the noble men who made their blood, their life, and their whole being, the ransom of our glory and honour. What we owe to them is not tears of pity, a cold admiration, nor the praises pronounced with the most eloquent art; but a profound gratitude and acknowledgment, testified and imprinted in our language and actions. Pay homage to them with your superfluity, for it is through their death that you possess your wealth and prosperity; consecrate to them a portion of your enjoyments, for it is to their heroism that you are indebted for them.

But, you will ask, how can we give to the dead? This question, however, is not one to be put by him whose noble and grateful heart appreciates the great sacrifice they have made to their country.

*Honour their memory*, not, however, with empty words, nor with simple monuments; time effaces inscriptions and destroys stone and marble. But direct your observations towards those around you,

and you will find near you, still surviving, the widows, orphans, sisters, brothers, and descendants of those brave men who were so prodigal of their blood and life for you. Instead of offering vain and pompous honours to the dead, honour their blood, which still runs in the veins of the children of their family. Accord to them that survive the distinctions you owe to their fathers, husbands, and brothers, who, covered with wounds and fronting death, defended your country, and with it the home of your posterity. What you give to the most inferior member of their family, you offer to those voluntary victims of patriotism.

Such was the custom of the ancient nations after their wars gloriously crowned with success. It was thus that each soul was inspired with the love of country; and it was thus that nations became great and free, in repulsing the attacks of invaders. But the gradual growth of weakness, the progress of effeminacy and egotism, insensibly suppressed and extinguished gratitude; envy and calumny vilified all distinguished merit, and spared neither the living nor the dead. Faith in virtue disappeared altogether from the earth, and with it ceased to exist virtue itself, or, at least, it became more rare. Indifference to country was substituted for the ancient patriotism; mercenary troops were engaged, and all national enthusiasm

amongst the soldiers became extinguished. There were still gradations of rank and station, but there was no longer a social tie between the sovereign and the subject; the spirit of party banished all real love of country. Thence arose the destruction of empires and the ruin of states; and it needed the all-powerful effect of calamity to restore to their souls their vigorous constitution and temperament. It is in the lap of misery that we have been taught lessons of wisdom and virtue: will those lessons remain engraved within our heart and memory?

The same as with an individual man, gratitude towards a benefactor is the least equivocal proof of nobleness of soul and love of virtue; so the public virtue of a nation is shown with greater brilliancy in its gratitude towards its defenders and their posterity or nearest kindred.

And should even this tender sentiment remain dormant in the towns, cities, provinces, and the country throughout, endeavour, at least, all ye fellow-mortals that hear me, to preserve it in the bosom of your own family. Even if the world itself were to return to a state of barbarity, who could prevent you from remaining a Christian? Who could prevent you from expressing, by your words and actions, that magnanimity of soul to which you are inspired by Christianity and patriot-

ism? In the effusion of your gratitude could you not bring succour, aid, consolation, and council, to those families, of whom some members may have taken up arms against the enemy, and whom despotism surrounds and threatens? Could you not be the protector and support of the orphans, widows, and sisters, of those heroes who have sacrificed their lives, upon the field of battle, to the independence and happiness of their country? It is for you, also, that they have marched to death; and it is for your security their blood has flowed!

Happiness still dwells in your home; but you would enjoy neither your fortune, your domestic tranquillity, nor the benefits of life, if these brave men had not magnanimously ventured their lives for you and yours. What would have happened if, devoting themselves to the defence of yourself and the nation generally, they had been obliged to give way to superior force, and fly? What would have been the fate of your family? And now that these brave warriors have sacrificed for you their whole existence, would you not be returning them what you have received from them, if you gave a portion of your property to their widows and orphans?

“We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren,” says the apostle. But is not life more

than nourishment and clothing? Ought we to be sparing of these, when others have presented us with their blood and life?

Just Heaven! when we have so often known that the angel of punishment follows closely all individual prevarications as sins against power, ought we to fear expiating our errors with sacrifices and devotion?—No; for “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”—AMEN.







## THE TEST OF ADVERSITY.

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ROMANS, v. 3.

“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience.”

“MY soul sinks beneath the storm of adversity, even as the reed bends before the blast of the tempest, not to rise again.

“I have lost all faith in the happiness of life; this depth of night can never be relieved by the cheering light of an Aurora; the serenity of morn will no more refreshen my soul.

“Cruelly struck by the hand of destiny already, I anticipate a still more painful future. I have already experienced great trials, but I expect to suffer still greater pain.”

O thou, who thus deplorest and tremblest so for thyself, verily thou art to be pitied; not because great calamity hath visited thee, but because thou darest greater still. *For the dread of evil is the greatest of all evils that can befall a man.*

You say there is no consolation for you. And has thy religion none? In this case, thy religion must be a poor miserable religion, if it be not capable of bringing the fullest comfort in the depth of thy woe. No! faith in Christ hast thou none. No! the love of God is not shed abroad in thy heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. I speak a language which is strange to thee. We who have Christ have a consolation which the power of all adversities cannot snatch from us. We possess a refuge wherein the shafts of Fate cannot assail us. And not merely that, but, like St. Paul, we say with holy exultation, "We glory in tribulations also." Unhappy man! understandest thou that sentence?

As the night with the day, the shadows with the light, so do the evil hours in life's current alternate with the good, the songs of rejoicing with the tears of mourning. But dost thou know what is most dangerous to man, and what he can least bear. Verily, it is not adversity, but *prosperity*!

Among a thousand mortals there is scarcely one who has been able, in seasons good and prosperous, to continue upright and worthy of himself. But when Fate storms upon them, their fortitude rallies itself, and all stand up magnanimously, and, at times, in a manner exciting our wonder. Therefore, also, it is said, necessity is the mother of

heroes, the instructress of the wise. Let me know, on the other hand, the hero who has proceeded from a life of pleasure and magnificence; or the philosopher who, in the arms of riotous success, has remained worthy of the admiration of all the world? Doubtlessly, I have seen many who first appeared great and estimable in suffering, and who sustained the hardest struggle with gigantic fortitude; but by far many more have I beheld to whom it was too difficult a matter to endure their good fortune.

It is by no means an uncommon thing to see poor and virtuous families, who hardly know how to maintain themselves from one day to another. With pious submission to the will of God, they put up with their sad destiny. And though it often fail them in the necessary conveniences of life, often in clothing and food, they continue steadfast and courageous. Their mutual love comforts them for the scorn to which they are exposed; labour and hunger season their scanty and cheap meal; trifles can procure them the greatest pleasure. Tender compassion towards other sufferers fills their breast. In their utmost need they are, through the agency of virtue and love, happy beings. Suddenly their adverse destiny changes; a large, unexpected fortune falls to them, it may be by distant inheritance. The hitherto miserable

cabin is exchanged for the handsome, commodious mansion; the tattered, worn-out raiment for better attire. Now friends crowd in, on all sides, with congratulations and compliments. The family, formerly gratified by the least thing, now makes higher pretensions. They talk of connections suitable to their station; they speak with disdain of those whose disdain they once received. They imagine it to be impossible to continue, with propriety, the olden intimacy with the former friends of their poverty; pride gets gradually in the ascendant; and self-will, caprice, and ingratitude, follow in the train. The family, once fortunate from its harmony, sunders widely; each is dissatisfied with the other; and, eventually, each goes his own way. Dissipation destroys the health which once, amid toil and temperance, was in a blooming condition. Cares, unknown formerly, embitter the enjoyments of what promised to be a happy state. Each individual feels this deeply, and sighs: I was more cheerful once when I had less; that fortune was our misfortune! Pitiable beings! they are right; for they could endure adversity easier than prosperity.

An orphan daughter, again, is seen weeping by the coffin of her mother. Sunk upon her knees, she breathes to the glorified spirit of the deceased the vows of virtue, to remain true to the holy

instructions which she had once received from those pious lips. And she keeps those vows. An orphan and helpless, the bereaved maiden goes into the service of strangers, and bears, with touching meekness, the rigour and caprice of her mistress. With tears she earns her bread. But custom makes her lot more endurable; her modesty moves, her ingenuousness pleases and gains confidence. She is poor but virtuous; and this virtue strews many a flower of joy upon her solitary and often rugged way: she is happy even in her destitution. She is not forsaken, for she has God in her heart; and the spirit of her mother seems to hover over her with benedictions. Suddenly her adverse destiny changes. Her innocence and beauty win her the heart of a wealthy man. As his wife she, the poor servant of strangers, now becomes the mistress over others. Dress and luxury excite her vanity. In the stream of showy amusements her pristine simplicity and humility disappear. Admired, flattered, by men of pleasure, she finds the temperate devotion of her husband by no means proportioned to the claims of her charms. She finds the depraved morals of the great world soon less offensive—soon quite natural. Her modesty yields before seductive examples. Her virtue takes wing; discord, jealousy, and strife, attend the ruptured marriage. The house, for-



merly the abode of joy, becomes a scene of discord and misery. Prodigality brings care; falsehood brings embarrassment; deceit brings remorse. The spirit of her mother smiles no more with blessings; it is changed into a frightful spectre. Poor thing! she knew how to bear her misfortune, but not her prosperity!

A man of irreproachable character, again, had a craving after fame and honour. He applied all his energies to overcome the obstacles to their attainment. By vigour and frankness of character he rendered himself worthy of the most distinguished honours; but they were not bestowed upon him. Adversity persecuted him; his outward circumstances were fluctuating. Further, his warmly beloved wife, or a dear child, dies; all his pretensions to the pleasures of life were buried with them. The thought of death, the startling view of the nothingness of everything earthly, reclaimed him from all ambitious desires. He only wished to be good; he did not aspire to be great. Indifferent towards that which once enraptured him, he sought no external worth, but spiritual merit. This very worth, and the diffidence, goodness, and complaisance, allied therewith, made him the favourite of all. Wherefore all voices spake loudly for him. But he is raised from his obscurity, promoted from honour to honour. He sees

all his circumstances suddenly changed. He stands amongst the great, himself a magnate of his country. His good fortune flatters him. The old ambition is nourished above measure. He looks down with pride upon the obscurity from which he arose. People compliment his deserts; he finds, in the voices of sycophants, nothing but truth; and he that will not hearken to them appears to him as a rival and an opponent. He grows more imperious, more domineering, more haughty, more violent. It oppresses him to be obliged to receive his equals. His pride repels; his arrogance makes him the object of secret ridicule and sarcasm. His friends grow cold. He is surrounded by disguised foes. Disquietude is his lot. His false steps are numbered. The passion which rules and tortures him adds to their list. The cup is full. Despised and hated, he is dashed from the eminence into well-merited disgrace. Alas! he was no longer strong enough to bear his good fortune. In adversity he had found his real happiness.

How many heroes, how many kings, were praise-worthy so long as they stood in conflict with adverse destiny! How touching was their magnanimity, their contempt of death; how admirable their cheerfulness in the moment of their greatest need, which seemed to subdue Fate itself, and to

compel Fortune to obey them! Their valour against the foe, their humanity towards the conquered, won them the love of all nations! And Fortune crowned their efforts, and led them from victory to victory, from triumph to triumph. But then vanished their former moderation. The mighty sword became their iron sceptre; the discreet spirit of self-defence grew into lust of conquest; firmness towards the foe changed into revenge. They who had won so much believed themselves invincible, with the world delivered up to them. They were the devastators of the world, and desired to stand like gods; for, sporting with fortune, and the lives of millions of human beings, they felt dissatisfied with being accounted merely men. But the curse of the world rose up against them, and cut them off. The eternal renown, after which they lusted, redounded to their eternal shame. In adversity they had become great,—heroes and philosophers; misfortune was their good fortune. But these poor, weak creatures had not thriven in their prosperity; for then, unhappily, they had descended to the rank of culprits and fools!

With injustice it is said, that suffering and adversity best test the worth of man. No; *prosperity is the real touch-stone of the worthiness of an individual.* Wherefore, we ought to receive the

days of necessity and mourning as real blessings from the hand of God. He who is not strong enough to bear a great evil, how will he be strong enough for great success?

Thus, in the midst of our calamities and most painful bereavements, we will gratefully reverence the love of God, and say with St. Paul, "We glory in tribulations also."

*The adversities which befall us only place us in the true relation, in which we ought to be, to this world; they only teach us, in fact, to prize aright those things wherein we take the greatest pleasure. While we lived on in unruffled repose, without knowing sorrow, our conception of life was a sensuously pleasant, but false and delusive dream. This dream must be dispelled from us; for we are not mere carnal, animal creatures; we have a higher destination. The beast knows nothing of death; but we see ours beforehand, and know that we are elected to eternity.*

Adversity first places us in the right relation with respect to the world, and teaches us what it is worth. Only he who has lost the greater part of his property by the conflagration of fire, the distress of an inundation, or the disasters of war, or by negligence and fraud, knows how little is to be built upon riches and affluence; knows how improperly we act in fixing our heart upon the

possession of earthly goods, and in expecting our entire happiness from them. The human mind is *spirit*; it ought to be independent of what is earthly, and make its happiness independent of all that is perishable and transitory. Whosoever cannot, even when all is snatched from him that he has toilingly and honestly acquired, in the midst of these losses, be of a cheerful mind; whosoever, after he has worn silk clothing, cannot smilingly change it for the coarsest of clothing; whosoever cannot live with meekness in high dignities, and with a noble pride in the deepest lowliness; whosoever cannot espouse poverty with composure, permit the scoffing judgments of the multitude to be passed upon him with indifference; in that man's heart all is not sound and strong: he has not the greatness of the true Christian. He must be purified and exalted by adversity, otherwise he belongs still to the class of lost men.

*For the calamities which befall us only impart to us the proper measure of patience and fortitude, and the consciousness of our original dignity.* That is lost in a life of luxury. We know virtue well, but are too comfortable to exercise it. Whatever we do is done, more or less, with petty by-views of gain of divers kinds. But anon comes tribulation, and breaks the slavish chain with which we are so bound to the earth, and which we have



depended upon and served, and that alone. Tribulation makes us free, and leads us back to the true liberty of Christianity. Assuredly the body has to submit to sacrifices, but the soul fortifies itself against the storms of fortune, and learns to despise the world and its delusions.

For myself, I glory in tribulations also! They are holy, warning angels that Thou, my God, sendest forth to call back the erring and lost creature to thyself. They come to detach me from what is earthly, wherein my soul lies captive and entangled. And I will learn to understand the language of these thy messengers which Thou sendest me. In the greatness of my griefs, above all earthly loss, will I acknowledge how deeply I have been immersed in sensuality, have degenerated from my primeval dignity, have been removed from Thee, my God. And even may my wounds burn and bleed, and mine eyes dissolve in tears; still, still, O Lord, my God, Thou merciful, eternal Friend of my soul, still will I praise Thee and thy love, and glory in tribulations also! —AMEN.





## THE END OF THE WORLD.

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ST. MATTHEW, xxiv. 36.

“ But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.”

ABSORBED in silent meditation, I love to survey and reflect upon the prodigious variety of the works of God, even when I discover them in parts I least suspected. What an endless diversity of land does the plough of the husbandman turn up ! Here, we behold light sand ; there, heavy clay ; and yonder, a black and fertile soil, formed of the mould of decomposed plants and animals. In one country, we find immense rocks of almost imperishable granite ; in another mountains of slate ; and again, in other parts, extensive layers of chalk and sandstone ! Why should I pass by, insensible to these phenomena of nature ? In whatever works the Creator has produced, even in those of the most simple and trivial nature, nothing is indifferent, nothing is to be treated

with contempt. The power and grandeur of the Supreme Being becomes everywhere manifest to the eyes of the wise man, who recognises in the different strata of rock, stone, and earth of which the globe is formed, a portion of the history of that world of which he himself is only a transitory inhabitant.

Most certain it is, that it is not by accident that this globe is formed by such a variety of masses into one solid and harmonic whole ; for not even the blade of grass nor the grain of dust is the work of mere accident. It is not the less evident that the earth was not produced suddenly and at once in its present shape ; for we find, in all parts of the world, evident and unerring traces of its gradual formation and successive revolutions. The vestiges discovered of the human race do not, it is true, extend beyond the period of six thousand years ; but how many thousands of years may have passed away before the creation of man—a period during which the earth was of irregular, wild, and uninhabitable form ! Moses, it is true, says : “ In the beginning God created the heaven and earth ; ” but *when* was this beginning ? Who can dive into the depth and obscurity of past eternity ? What are millions of centuries in the eyes of the Eternal ? —Alas, scarcely a fleeting moment !

“ And the earth was without form and void,”

says Moses, in his history of the Creation. But how long had this state continued? Many thousands of years may, perhaps, have passed away before the elements, beginning to ferment, became divided—before the light separated from the darkness, and the water from the dry land; before the plants grew out of the fertile earth; and before the insects, and birds, and animals of all kinds could find shelter and nourishment.

What was this globe before the will of God produced man to inhabit it? How long had it already existed at the period when a mortal appeared for the first time to admire the miracles, and prostrated himself in adoration before the Author of so much glory and magnificence?

If we study and contemplate the globe as it appears before us at the present day, if we learn and appreciate the results of the efforts made in penetrating through its surface, we shall discover, that this vast globe, of which the nucleus must remain concealed from us for ever, is, as it were, enveloped in various coats or layers of earth and rock, formed gradually, one after the other. Hundreds and thousands of years perhaps may elapse before one of these layers becomes hardened, and a second and a third become formed.

The traveller discovers with astonishment, on the summit of the highest mountains of the earth,

and imprisoned in the hardest rocks, muscles and remains of animals which in our times are only to be found in the sea or in a very distant and completely opposite part of the globe, and other remains of animals which belong to no species actually existing. Discoveries equally astonishing are made in the bosom of the earth, where, in layers of chalk, many hundred fathoms below the surface and completely petrified, repose the remains of animals, totally unknown at the present day, and belonging to an anterior age, far beyond our means of calculation.

Thus, at a period which the memory of man has not within control, our globe was inhabited by living beings of another species. An unknown power destroyed all this order of things, before one mortal of the human race was born; for not the slightest vestige of human remains has ever been found amongst the petrifications of that ancient world.

Many revolutions have evidently taken place of this nature; for in the most deep and ancient of these masses of stone and rock, are found a very different species of animals to those already described, and consequently of a more recent existence. Thus a second and a third world have flourished and been inhabited, and subsequently destroyed and buried beneath a vast layer



of chalk and clay. In those layers which more closely approach the surface of the globe, and which are, consequently, the latest that have been formed, a completely new order of creation is discovered. Besides the fossils of animals, are found also the petrifications of wood and plants, of which several species are still in existence at the present day.

But from these more recently formed strata proceed fresh miracles and enigmas. We behold in them the graves of animals and plants, which at the present time are only indigenous in other parts of the world. Animals accustomed to live in the hottest climates lie buried in the bosom of the earth, the surface of which is in our days covered with ice and snow, which rarely melt; and palm-trees lie prostrate where in the present day they are only known by the pen of the historian and the pencil of the artist. What force could have thus displaced the globe, that its former position towards the sun has changed so wonderfully? Have, then, burning deserts formerly existed, where now we only behold fields of eternal ice? When have these revolutions in nature taken place? History makes no mention of them; for no man was then born to bear witness to them, or hand down to us a memorial of them.

The last revolution in the earth is mentioned to

us by Moses, and is described also by the most ancient traditions of the people. This was the destruction of the greatest portion of the human race by the Deluge. But the continuance of this extraordinary inundation was but for a short time ; everything was not destroyed, and the surface of the earth very soon recovered itself, and soon flourished and became again numerously inhabited. This dreadful occurrence took place about three thousand eight hundred years since. There probably perished then, or by other partial inundations, the gigantic species of animals, whose bones have been discovered, lying not very deeply buried beneath the earth, by men of the present day.

However this may be, a holy shudder seizes my whole frame when I think on these primitive ages and the destinies of this globe, before it served for the habitation of the human race. O God, miraculous and powerful Being, how mysterious are Thy works ! What was in existence before I was created ? and what shall exist when I am no more ? All changes, and all dissolves itself in the ocean of time ; but O God, Thou alone remainest eternally what Thou hast always been in all ages ; in Thee there is not a shadow of variation !

If, in unknown ages, this world with its inhabitants, to me equally unknown, has at different periods suffered destructive revolutions, I must

conclude, with fear and dread, that it is possible it will, sooner or later, undergo another fearful scene of universal destruction. This possibility becomes probability, nay certainty, when I reflect that all things created are subject to decay, and nothing remains constant in the same state. Jesus Christ has prophesied this ruin of the world, and the end of the world is a point of faith amongst all people.

Yes, my trembling soul, acknowledge it with awe and dread, before the majesty of the Almighty; this earth has not existed since eternity, neither will it continue to exist to eternity. One day will arrive which shall be the last of this whole globe, and each minute that passes hastens on that day. God knows that day on which our whole system of life shall be dissolved, and marked for it its station in the rank of ages when he created the universe. He has determined the epoch when the course of the stars shall become obstructed and stopped, and perhaps a comet in its passage may annihilate the habitation of the human race. May not, perhaps, the four small planets discovered a few years since, by astronomers, in our solar system, and which in company together move round the sun, be the remains of a ruined world? Do they not predict to us the fate of that we now inhabit?

Thus, then, these seas, these lakes, and these

rivers, will evaporate and become dispersed! These mountains, reaching to the very clouds above, will totter on their bases, and fall together! These valleys, these hills, which still are decorated by the hand of Spring with its variegated garlands of blooming flowers, shall vanish, and henceforth be as dust in the air! These innumerable smiling villages, with all their happy inhabitants—these cities, with their gorgeous palaces and choice works of art and science—will disappear and pass away, without leaving a single trace behind! Alas! day of nameless terror, which shall bring the end of all things, thou art summoned by God, and thy time is already chosen!

Already, many centuries since, this day of universal destruction was generally considered to be close at hand; but as yet it has not arrived. Many even now imagine it to be approaching quickly; but they will also deceive themselves. They pretend to read the proximity of the world's dissolution at one moment in the obscure descriptions of the prophets of the Old Testament, and at the next, in the enigmatical delineations of the Revelation of St. John. And what is the result of this? These people, by a vain curiosity, give themselves up to superstitious speculations, equally frivolous and presumptuous. They excite their imagination with absurd visions, and their vanity is flattered

when their mad suppositions and foolish conjectures gain some credit and influence. Without any other revelations than their own chimerical dreams, and without any superior knowledge to that of any other mortal, they pretend to unveil the hidden secrets of Omniscience and the mysteries of the Divine mind. Beware of these false prophets and fanatics, who mimic the Scriptures, and assume the appearance of true believers of religion and humanity. Do not attach yourselves to them, but to our Divine Master, and to the true word of the eternal Son of God; for whilst they announce, conjecture, or calculate with proud confidence, the epoch of the reign of a thousand years, of the end of the world, and of the last day of judgment, Jesus, the Master of us all, avowed to his disciples: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."

This dread of the last day excited by fanaticism, is therefore not only vain, but also highly culpable, because it places more faith in the folly of credulous mortals than in the assurances of the Saviour of men.

And why, then, feel so much terror at the thought of the end of the world? Is the destruction of the earth more to me than death? And is not death a change I must undergo, whether the world be destroyed or continue to exist? What



does it concern my silent and motionless heart, or my body changed into dust, whether the sun shines over them or not? And even if the world should become ruins, will not my immortal spirit still survive it?

Ambitious fanaticism or superstitious credulity usually takes advantage of the appearance of comets in the heavens, in order to give weight to their predictions. As long as men were unacquainted with the nature of these flaming bodies of light, they regarded them as indications of the anger of God; and, imagining they perceived in the heavens a rod of fire, they held it for the announcement of war, pestilence, or famine,—although these evils already desolated the earth around, without being preceded by these comets.

The observations, however, which have continued to be made during several centuries, have taught us that these comets are celestial bodies the same as the stars; and since, therefore, it has become now usual to announce with confidence, beforehand, the return of these comets, the unfounded dread, hitherto so universally held, that they were only the messengers of evil, has vanished. According to the observations hitherto made by men of science, many hundreds of comets may, in their elliptical course, approach more or less the sphere of action of our sun, or even the

orbit of our globe. Many of these comets present themselves only at such a distance as to be quite invisible to the naked eye ; but if it is considered with what wisdom the respective movements of these celestial bodies are directed, with what order and regularity they pursue and cross each other in their progress, without clashing or confusion ; and when it is remembered what interminable and incalculable spaces form the course of these worlds, it is by no means probable that, even in thousands of years, a comet can approach sufficiently near to the earth to destroy it. If we imagine to ourselves a few grains of dust floating in the rays of the sun, in an empty space of some thousands of miles, and moving in regular rows and circles, we shall then have an idea of the proportion between the space of the celestial bodies and that of the firmament in which the hand of the Almighty directs their course ; and this representation will show the improbability, even during a long series of centuries, of the appearance of any comet to threaten our globe.

But, however vain may be the dread of the approaching end of the world, the thought that the world will be one day destroyed does not less turn the mind to elevated meditation. The certainty of this event is handed down to us in the

declarations of the word of God, and in the monuments of the terrific revolutions with which the globe has been already visited.

But even should this world not be destroyed until after the lapse of centuries or thousands of years, as already has happened, the idea of such an event remains not the less terrible and awful to the human soul. After the expiration of a hundred years, nothing more will remain in this world, either of myself or of the greater portion of my contemporaries ; and after a dream perhaps of a hundred thousand years, nothing more will remain visible of this earth itself. Then will have vanished, country, people, cities, and all the productions of human industry and human art ; and all will have disappeared and have been swept away, and swallowed in one universal tomb, as if nothing thereof had ever existed. Wherefore, then, ye rulers of the world, is your ambition to found new and immeasurable empires ? Alas ! your works are overwhelmed, and fresh mountains raise their heads over the unknown ruins of your vast empires. Wherefore, then, are all your efforts to leave your glory as an inheritance for posterity ? Alas ! this posterity no longer exists, and the memory of your actions has perished ; you remain as if you had never been ! Perhaps, after millions of years, new generations of the

human race will wander over this earth; this globe, grown young again by a new creation, will not suspect that a race of ancestors has lived, thought, acted, and suffered before them, on the same spot, but of which age no vestiges remain, except perhaps a few remains of petrified bones discovered in the bosom of the rocks.

Everything that bears the name terrestrial, will only have one fixed term and end. But Thou, O God, who, from Thy throne, dost behold and order the course of these great changes—Thou alone art eternal and immutable! All that is born of dust will pass away, and become changed; only the power which animates the body in various forms will remain: the body itself will disappear, but the spirit which dwells within it will continue to live.

Away from me, hence, vain pride, perishable glory, and pomp of our day! Who will know, in a few thousand years, whether I have ever existed, and what I have done whilst on earth? Let my soul no longer attach itself to the things of the world, but only to what exists eternally.

To Thee, Father of the world, Principle of life, Light of light, almighty and all-good Ruler of the spiritual world, shall my soul attach itself. I will no longer think of earthly glory, if I only have value in Thy eyes. I will no longer wish to

be surrounded with riches; for what do I derive from this brilliant dust? Only as my spirit may receive dignity by Thy doctrine, O my heavenly Instructor, Jesus, so will I remain: this alone shall be my eternal riches.

All passes away—O my soul, forget it not!—all except God and His love—all except the souls sanctified by virtue and purified by the grace of the Redeemer!—AMEN.

THE END.

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